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Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Art History

Diplomová práce
Master thesis

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Dánsko - Československo 1947-1957, Umenie a architektúra za hranicami
funkcionalizmu, surrealizmu a Bauhausu

Denmark - Czechoslovakia 1947-1957, The Art and Architecture Beyond
Functionalism, Surrealism and Bauhaus

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2014

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Associate Professor PhDr. Marie Klimešová, PhD for her guidance and encouragement as well as to Associate Professor Mikkel Bolt for his assistance and great inspiration. Valuable advice provided by Professor PhDr. Rostislav Švácha, CSc.; PhDr. Alexandr Matoušek, PhD and PhD Fellow Jens Tang Kristensen was greatly appreciated. My grateful thanks are also extended to Mgr. Ladislava Hornáková and Mrs. Potěšilová for allowing me to get acquainted with the work of Zdeněk Plesník. I would also like to thank the Danish Government Scholarship and University of Copenhagen which made possible my research stay in Denmark. Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their support and encouragement throughout my study.

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně, že jsem řádně citoval všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 19. 5. 2014

Abstract

The thesis is exploring art and architecture in Denmark and Czechoslovakia in the period 1947-1957. The main interest was to see how the interwar avant-garde movements such as Functionalism and Surrealism, as well as the legacy of Bauhaus, developed after the WWII. Yet, Functionalism and Surrealism can also be seen not only as mere artistic styles but as two different attitudes towards life, Rational and Romantic respectively. The latter, which is a passionate protest against the status quo, can especially in its revolutionary or utopian dimension serve as a form of engagement free of the simplifying Cold War binaries.

Abstrakt

Diplomová práca je venovaná umeniu a architektúre v Dánsku a Československu v rokoch 1947-1957. Hlavným záujmom bolo sledovať, ako sa medzivojnové hnutia ako funkcionalizmus a surrealizmus, ako tiež odkaz Bauhausu, vyvinuli po Druhej svetovej vojne. Avšak funkcionalizmus a surrealizmus je možno vnímať ako viac než len umelecké smery, jedná sa i o dva odlišné prístupy k životu, teda racionálny a romantický. Ten druhý, teda vášnivý protest proti statu quo, môže zvlášť vo svojej revolučnej či utopickej dimenzii slúžiť ako forma angažovanosti nezávislá od zjednodušujúcich polarít Studenej vojny.

Key words

Denmark, Czechoslovakia, 1940s, 1950s, Architecture, Art, Art in architecture, Synthesis of arts, Design, Monumentality, Functionalism, Surrealism, Bauhaus, Abstraction, Concrete art, Cold War, Engagement, Communist Party, Socialist realism, Cobra, Linien, Linien II, Group Ra, Group 42, Midnight Edition, Explosionalism, Romantic anti-capitalism

Klíčová slova

Dánsko, Československo, čtyřicátá léta 20. století, padesátá léta 20. století, architektura, umění, umění v architektuře, syntéza umění, design, monumentalita, funkcionalismus, surrealismus, Bauhaus, abstrakce, geometrická abstrakce, Studená válka, angažovanost, komunistická strana, socialistický realismus, Cobra, Linien, Linien II, Skupina Ra, Skupina 42, Edice Půlnoc, Explosionalismus, romantický anti-kapitalismus

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Introduction

In Search of the Figures of Revolutionary Romanticism

The following thesis is dealing with the afterlife and the legacy of the interwar movements such as Functionalism, Surrealism and Bauhaus in Denmark and Czechoslovakia. The fact that I examined the art and architecture from Denmark and Czechoslovakia requires a short explanation. My deeper interest in the early postwar art was launched by the exhibition *Years in Days - Czech Art 1945-1957* (2010) curated by Marie Klimešová. The exhibition, as its sequel *The End of the Avant-Garde? - Czech Art 1938-1948* (2011) prepared by a team of art historians led by Hana Rousová, presented art from the period which was for a long time in a shade of the golden decades of the 1930s and the 1960s. Yet, it also provided a link between those two decades, showing modernism as a sometimes hidden or reconsidered undercurrent, but still present and provoking a reaction. In this spirit, it also answered some questions I have been posing myself earlier, such as what happened to the artists and architects which I had in my mind mostly connected with the 1930s during the following decades? I knew that Toyen left for Paris in 1947, but I barely knew any of her paintings from that period, and, conversely, Egon Bondy was for me mainly a middle-aged or old man from the 1970s on, but I knew very little about his beginnings. Originally, I wanted to make my own research spanning the largely anti-modernist period 1937 to 1957. This gradually proved to be an unrealistic goal for a master thesis and my attention gravitated more towards the year 1947 and the following decade until 1957. At the same time, the two above mentioned exhibitions were only dealing with Czech art, which evoked a certain need for a comparison with the development/s in the international context. The plurality of the possible developments was something that has also attracted me from the very beginning, rather than comparing the Czech art and architecture to the modernist canon of the Paris—New York axis. This also coincided with my study exchange in Denmark, where I hoped to explore the development of modern and postwar art and architecture in order to compare it with the Czech situation, although I barely knew more than a few names such as Arne Jacobsen or Asger Jorn at that time.

Getting acquainted with the Danish modernism as a counterpart to the Czech one was for me an important dimension of rethinking of the map of the European modernism. The comparison, or sometimes just a juxtaposition of two relatively ‘peripheral centres’ meant for me a better understanding of reception of the international movements such as Functionalism (or the International Style), Surrealism and Abstraction linked to Bauhaus.

Although these movements met always with a similarly welcoming reception, their regional translations differed. The issue of translation was at the same time both in Denmark and Czechoslovakia, as well as in many other smaller countries, connected to a desire not only to 'be up-to-date' and to 'catch up' with Paris, but also to create an authentic contribution in order to open up the 'top-down' flow of the Western modernism. The WWII, during which both Denmark and Czechoslovakia became occupied by the Nazis, became an uncanny occasion for intensification of these efforts. Although the nature of and the cultural life under the occupation largely differed in both countries, both Danish and Czech artists and architects found themselves temporarily cut off from Paris, the capital of modernism. For some the isolation meant a confusion and attempts to stick to what they knew from the interwar period. For others it was a moment of concentration on the possibilities of developing something new which in most cases tried to synthesise the interwar modernism with fresh ideas. An Oedipal complex played its role too, since it was mainly the younger generation of architects and artists which felt the most urgent need to reconsider or reject the father figures of André Breton or Le Corbusier. Yet, this move was not unconditional, since the figures as Wassily Kandinsky, but also Karel Teige or Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen were highly respected by most younger generation artist. Similarly, the younger architects such as Jørn Utzon or Zdeněk Plesník recognised Le Corbusier.

It is important to underline that both Le Corbusier and Breton (Kandinsky died in 1944 and Klee in 1940) felt themselves a need of a renewal. This was reflected in Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* (1947-52) as well as in the International Surrealist Exhibition *Le Surréalisme en 1947*. It was also in 1947 that Breton refused any further collaboration with the Communist Party. Although not always pronounced, the changing relationship of artists, architects and theoreticians to the Communist Party was a no less interesting subject for me. Similarly to Functionalism and Surrealism, also the Communist Party was undergoing a transformation. This was, however, caused by the growing polarisation of the East and West leading to the Cold War. In the cultural field, it was marked by a growing dogmatism reflected by the adoption of the Zhdanov Doctrine (1946), which influenced the cultural climate in the countries under the Soviet influence, as was the case of Czechoslovakia after February 1948. The simultaneous dogmatisation of the Western communist parties posed challenges to many Marxist intellectuals too, placing them under a double blackmail of the 'capitalist freedom' and the 'socialist peace'. To fight for or against either of the polarised options meant to compromise, and the only truly revolutionary option seemed to reject both establishments. This became particularly clear in 1956 with the suppression of the Hungarian revolution and the Suez Crisis. If the

general thaw of the de-Stalinisation in the Eastern Block allowed a relative freedom to a public presentation of works diverging from Socialist realism and gave a hope for change—a hope that gradually led towards the Prague Spring of 1968—; elsewhere, many intellectuals had lost their hope in the possibility of the change of the old structures. One of the intellectuals who did not lose his hope in the collaboration with the Communist Party in 1947 like Breton, but ten years later in 1957, was the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991). Breton and Lefebvre thus for me symbolise in their—respective abrupt and gradual—break with the Communist Party the whole decade full of —abrupt or gradual—breaks of many artists and architects with the movements that initially inspired them, such as Functionalism, Surrealism and Bauhaus, and with any kind of dogmatism in general in favour of the freer but equally serious conceptions of art and politics. Coming back to Lefebvre, while his book *The Critique of Everyday Life* (1947) was a source of inspiration for *Cobra* artists, his text *Revolutionary Romanticism* (1957) brought him in touch with the Situationists. *Revolutionary Romanticism* was for Lefebvre a farewell to the Communist Party and marked for him a moment when he realised that the revolutionary movements were possible also outside the parties, as was proved by Fidel Castro in Cuba at that time. Shortly afterwards, he left the party himself, believing in a spontaneity outside of organisations and institutions. The attempt to overcome the contradictions of the rationality, characteristic of the French Cartesian culture, and the carnival spontaneity—of Lefebvre's home department Pyrénées-Atlantiques—make Lefebvre also a good candidate for joining the ranks of the figures of romantic anti-capitalism, next to Breton and Debord.

Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism (1984) is in fact the title of a study by Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy in which they tried to reclaim the notion of Romanticism from its narrow understanding as a literary trend of the beginning of the 19th century. For Sayre and Löwy, Romanticism is much more than that, it is a worldview, *an essential component of modern culture with an extraordinarily contradictory character*. Romanticism is for Sayre and Löwy *at the same time (or alternately) revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, cosmopolitan and nationalist, realist and fanciful, restorationist and utopian, democratic and aristocratic, republican and monarchist, red and white, mystical and sensual ...*, contradictions which can be found not only in the movement as such, but also in a single author or a single text or work. The merit of the Marxist studies lie for the authors in defining the *opposition to capitalism in the name of pre-capitalist values* as the unifying element of the Romantic movement which is, in other words, a passionate protest against the industrial capitalist society and partly the Enlightenment.

The study by Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy, as well as some later works by Michael Löwy in which he developed the notion of Romantic anti-capitalism to include thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Franz Kafka, André Breton or Guy Debord, provided me with yet another tool how to look at the artists, architects and theoreticians presented in this paper. A *Revolutionary and/or Utopian Romantic* is for Sayre and Löwy a type of Romantic, which projects the nostalgia for a pre-capitalist past into the hope for a post-capitalist future, unlike those accepting the present order or living in an illusion of a possible return to the past. Asger Jorn is a prime example, touching the very nature of the problem in his 1947 essay *Apollo or Dionysius*, in which he pitched Classicism and Romanticism against each other opting for the latter. The question for me was not, however, an 'either-or' question; the figures from Steen Eiler Rasmussen to Jørn Utzon, Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen to Asger Jorn or Paul Gadegaard, Ladislav Žák to Zdeněk Plesník, Karel Teige to Václav Zykmond or Vladimír Boudník, were for me interesting exactly for the often contradictory nature of their work sustaining the tension between the realist Rationalism and poetic Romanticism. This tension ran also the movements whose afterlife is discussed here: Functionalism proclaimed the utilitarian function its guideline, yet the best works of Functionalism have an important aesthetic dimension too; Bauhaus was as much about the rational democratisation of consumption of design as about the Romantic expression of Kandinsky and Klee; and Surrealism, the most Romantic movement of the three, could be also seen as a snobbish caprice tolerated by and confirming the bourgeois society. While until now I have been paying attention to the movements represented in the thesis, at this point I would like to explain almost complete absence of another originally interwar movement dominant in the 1950s, that is the Socialist realism or historicism. The reason is simple, most architects and artists that I have chosen to discuss were those least apt falling for any kind of dogmas and followed their own visions of aesthetics and politics.

* * *

The concept of the Revolutionary Romanticism, together with the interest in the afterlife of the interwar movements, bounds the four chapters of the thesis in a whole. The four chapters which the thesis consists of are largely heterogenous and asymmetrical. They have a different range and different depth, some are organised around a certain case study, others are less focussed on single authors and instead follow the transformation of the inter-generational relations as well as the relations between the peers standing for different values or different expressions of basically the same values.

Regarding the content of the chapters, Chapter 1 examines the attitudes towards Functionalism after 1947, mainly by comparing the works and texts by various Danish and Czech architects as well as relevant architectural discussions by non-architects. While some called for monumentality achieved by various syntheses of Functionalism and Classicism, others saw the merit of Functionalism precisely in its opposition to Classicism. This acknowledged, a need to move further was growing stronger among the architects who aimed for more than a rational utilitarianism. How the post-Functionalist stage could look like is also partly presented in this chapter, but it mainly fills Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 mainly presents the work of Jørn Utzon and Zdeněk Plesník, two architects that can be considered as members of the third generation modernist architects. Their work, which stood in contrast to the official or mainstream architecture of their respective countries (or blocks), shared not only a strong connection to modernism on the one hand and the further past on the other, but also a Romantic attachment to the unselfconscious architecture and the rational attitude towards prefabrication.

Chapter 3 is following the artists who were departing from Surrealism. The younger generation discovered Surrealism just before or during the WWII and thus has created their own response to the impulses coming from Surrealism free of any orthodoxy. The actual question of the chapter is: how was the relationship of this younger generation to the foundational figures such as Wilhelm Freddie and Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen in Denmark or Karel Teige and Toyen in Czechoslovakia? Rather than following the formal development from Surrealism to its synthesis with Abstraction, I was interested in tracing the subtle cobweb of relations in between the generations as well as the generational peers.

Chapter 4 presents different themes of Bauhaus echoed in Denmark and Czechoslovakia during the late 1940s and 1950s. Besides the focus on applied arts and attempts to bring art into architecture, I was also interested in different modes of engagement and—employment, putting the privileged professional status of the artist in question, especially in an environment related to the industrial production.

The chapters never attempt to provide the reader with an objective picture of the art and architecture of the whole decade. Due to their extend, a minimum background could be provided for each chapter and a lot was omitted altogether. Despite the title, no architecture or art from Slovakia was included either, while, on the contrary, some authors are followed into their—sometimes voluntary—exiles.

Chapter 1: Beyond Functionalism

Both Denmark and Czechoslovakia have until these days been proud of the achievements of their interwar architecture. Although in both countries there were also more Classicist tendencies in architecture well until (and after) 1930s, Functionalism represented, at least in retrospect, what we connect most with the interwar period. Rejected by both the Nazis and the Soviets, the Functionalist architecture also gained a new political dimension since mid-1930s. It was not only the Nazi and Communist officials, however, who dismissed modern architecture with Functionalism in the fore. Since the mid-1930s, in line with *rappel à l'ordre*, also a more general growing tired with Functionalism started to manifest itself. In this chapter, I would like to examine the attitudes towards Functionalism after 1947, mainly by comparing the texts by various Danish architects as well as an architectural 'outsider' Asger Jorn. Jorn's notion of 'Counter-Functionalism', which has gradually developed in his writings since the late 1940s, belongs to one of the most original reactions to the exhaustion of Functionalism. In the Czech context, I pay attention the texts by Karel Teige among others and the works of architects close to him who attempted at moving beyond Functionalism in very different ways.

As mentioned, the growing tiredness with Functionalism was a general phenomenon. In Denmark, one famous example was the project for the City Hall in Aarhus. The competition, which took place already in 1937, was won by Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971) in collaboration with Erik Møller. As Carsten Thau and Kjeld Vindum showed, Jacobsen was at the time involved with various kinds of hybrids between pure modernism and its more classicising alternative. Although the Aarhus City Hall is today internationally appraised as one of the most successful public buildings of modern architecture, they define it as perhaps the least resolved example of Jacobsen's modern-classicist hybrids. Also the people's reactions were quite split after the results of the competition were made public. According to Richard Gandrup of *Aarhus Stiftstidende*, the publics were tired of the two decades of modernism stripped of all the traditions. Instead, they asked for monumentality—and for a city hall with a tower. Thau and Vindum diagnosed the situation quite accurately as a '*hangover after Modernism's abrupt break with tradition and history*,' and if the city council and the mayor backed the winning project, it was only under the condition that it was reworked to be more monumental and to include a tower. Reluctantly, Jacobsen and Møller took up the challenge in the end.¹

¹ Carsten Thau and Kjeld Vindum, Arne Jacobsen, Copenhagen 2001, 99-104.

In 1948, a couple of years after the completion of the Aarhus City Hall, architect Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1898–1990) evaluated the building. Rasmussen criticised the composition of the volumes as almost arbitrary and although he admitted excellence of some solutions and details, others were for him clumsy or even embarrassing. Compared to Martin Nyrop's Copenhagen City Hall (completed 1905), everything was '*less durable and robust, less natural, more refined*' in Aarhus. These were adjectives linked to Mannerism and Rasmussen did not leave space for doubts. At another place he continued: '*Instead of an old formalism, we have been given a new one of an artificial and expensive variety.*' New conventions substituted traditions thrown overboard by modernism.² The allegations of Functionalism for its formalism were becoming more and more frequent after the WWII. Not only from a relatively conservative position of Rasmussen, but also from the younger generation of his students at the Architecture School of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Tobias Faber, a student of Rasmussen and a classmate and friend of Jørn Utzon, would also recall that while being students, their main enemy was the academic version of modernism as practised by Arne Jacobsen and his contemporaries.³

The combination of Functionalism and Classicism as seen in the Aarhus City Hall became a common formula for important public buildings in the early postwar years, too. While adding classical elements to functionalist building, as in Aarhus, was one way of dealing with monumentality, the other was modernisation of Classicism, as championed by Steen Eiler Rasmussen. Sharing his sceptical attitude towards modern architecture affiliated to Le Corbusier or Bauhaus, Rasmussen was close to e.g. German architect Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950), whom he much admired.⁴ In this sense, Rasmussen represented a version of humanism, whose criticism of modern architecture was targeted from a romantic, but also 'reactionary' point of view, close to Swiss architect Peter Meyer (1894–1984). Meyer, who addressed the issue since 1937 in the journal *Das Werk*, championed as the best examples of new monumentality the Swedish 'new empiricism' of Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, as well as the Perret brothers in France.⁵ In this chapter, however, I am much more interested in architects and artists who tried to find

² Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Arkitekturen*, in: Frithiof Brandt, Haakon Shetelig, and Alf Nyman, eds., *Vor Tids Kunst og Digtning i Skandinavien*, Copenhagen 1948, 38 and 41 f. Quoted in Thau and Vindum 2001 (note 1), 100-101, 107.

³ Richard Weston, *Jørn Utzon: Inspiration, Vision, Architecture*, Copenhagen 2008, 18.

⁴ Olaf Lind, *Steen Eiller Rasmussen*, København 2008, 76 and 79; Steen Eiller Rasmussen, *Paris under verdensudstillingen, Udsnit fra: Tilskueren*, 1937, 165-166.

⁵ Ákos Moravánszky, *Peter Meyer and the Swiss Discourse on Monumentality*, in: *Future Anterior*, Volume 8, No. 1 (Summer 2011), 1-20.

ways beyond Functionalism, rather than seeing its future in a mixture with the eternal Classicism. Despite the differences and their mutual antipathy, in their connection to Classicism, both Jacobsen and Rasmussen were just two sides of the same coin. Yet, the main representative of the architecture 'beyond Functionalism', Jørn Utzon (1918-2008)—whom I will discuss in the second chapter—was a student of S. E. Rasmussen.

Before I pay my full attention to Jørn Utzon, I would like to examine the attitudes towards Functionalism around 1947. One interesting text is *Farewell to Functionalism* (1947) by a young Danish architect Robert Dahlmann Olsen. During the occupation of Denmark, Olsen edited the magazine *Helhesten* together with Asger Jorn, and also their views of Functionalism were similar. The two of them met in Paris in 1938, and at that time they went to see Le Corbusier's buildings together. Later, Olsen also introduced Jorn to a circle of architects at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, such as Jørn Utzon and Edvard Heiberg, whose views will also be discussed here.⁶ In his text, Olsen saw the emergence of a new style conditioned by the emergence of a new society. Thus, it was not possible to predict how the new architecture would look like; however, Olsen—as Jorn and Utzon—was looking for inspiration in the structures overlooked by architects such as the bricolage houses of the allotment gardens. The supposed participation of common people in the process of architecture design in the USSR was highlighted as an example, and its 'reactionary' outcomes were explained as a result of ignorance of the development of modern art. Architecture, as art, should become collective and emerge from a collaboration of architects and artists, while in an ideal society all people would become artists. And because the new architecture would be an architecture of a classless society, the inspiration had to come from such societies (e.g. New Guinea, Bali, Liberia) without their idealisation.⁷

If Dahlmann Olsen was waving farewell to Functionalism, others preferred more continuity. In 1948, the magazine *Arkitekten* published a text by Edvard Heiberg (1897-1958) titled *Functionalism*. When speaking of the Danish functionalists, one could barely speak about many more than Vilhelm Lauritzen, Hans Hansen and Mogens Lassen, wrote Heiberg. He distinguished between Functionalism as an approach and the so called *Funkis* as a style. Heiberg paid attention to the recent developments of the first generation functionalists, whose architecture became monumental (J.J.P. Oud, Mart Stamm and André Lurçat), as well as to the younger generation who criticised Functionalism for its resignation on formal expression and artistic qualities. Are the new anti-functionalist

⁶ Ruth Baumeister, ed., *Fraternité Avant Tout*, Asger Jorn's writings on art and architecture, Rotterdam 2011, 8.

⁷ Robert Dahlmann Olsen, *Farvel til funktionalismen*, in: *Arkitekten* (U), 1947, 133-137.

opinions reactionary?, asked Heiberg. First, we should consider what they react to, he answered himself. '*Functionalism was capitalism's breakthrough in architecture 130 years after the French revolution;*' hence, it was progressive in regard to the prevailing means of production, but not in regard to the possession of these means. As a manifestation of capitalism in architecture, Functionalism—unlike the new architecture of the USSR—lacked a sense of unity. Thus, Heiberg continued, '*To speak about reaction because one doesn't build in functionalist style is of course nonsense.*' What we should have kept from Functionalism was its careful analysis of the projects and the rational working methods. These should have been developed to analyse the social conditions in the city planing and housing, as well as the psychological factors, which the primitive Functionalism had overlooked. '*A new formalism is on the threshold,*' warned Heiberg, and we shall beware that this new formalism doesn't fall into schematism or into artistic usurpation ('*to realise one's own little ego*'). But if the new tendency can enrich our architecture, we should not reject it beforehand as reactionary, especially if it can help us towards a sense of unity in the artistic formation. In this regard, Heiberg also criticised the separation of architects and artists and their ignorance of each other's work.⁸

The main points of Heiberg's text were in line with the writings of Asger Jorn (1914-1973), perhaps the harshest critic of Functionalism around and after 1947. Jorn had a firsthand experience with Le Corbusier as one of his collaborators on the *Temps Nouveaux* Pavilion. Back in Denmark during the WWII, he started to reconsider the achievements of modern architecture. In 1946, he travelled to Sweden and got in touch with Leif Reinius, an architect and editor of the architecture magazine *Byggmästaren*. Reinius gave Jorn a chance to publish some of his texts, such as *The Living Essence of the Language of Form* (1946) and *A New Form of Visual Interpretation and Its Implication* (1946), in which Jorn mainly presented the ideas of a Swedish professor of architecture history Eric Lundberg. Lundberg's book *The Life Content of the Language of Form* (1945) was calling attention to architecture that departed from non-classical principles and understanding of space based on perception and emotional experience. It provided Jorn with a framework for his own concepts of anti-classical, irrational and sensual architecture. Lundberg's book deepened Jorn's doubts about Le Corbusier and offered an alternative materialistic theory which could serve as a basis for a new synthesis of the arts.⁹

In 1947, Jorn published three texts in which he developed his anti-classical approach to art and architecture which should have replaced Functionalism. These were

⁸ Edvard Heiberg, *Funktionalismen*, in: *Arkitekten* (M), 50år (anniversary issue), 1948, 35-50.

⁹ Baumeister 2011 (note 6), 14-19.

Yin/Yang, The dialectical materialist philosophy of life; Apollo or Dionysius; and Homes for the People or Concrete Castles in the Air? In the first one, Jorn made a reference to the Chinese principles of Yin and Yang and highlighted the philosophy of Tao—‘China’s ur-communist *life dialectic*’—as materialist and focused on the mankind and culture in contrast to Classicism, which posited the intellectual reflection and civilisation above human nature. This false and ‘degenerate’ tradition of Classicism, which is preventing people from living the natural way of life, has been imposed on us by the upper classes, Jorn explains. The combination of Yin and Yang was for Jorn ‘*the natural unification of day and night, male and female, of activity and passivity, of work and rest ... It is the Dionysian ideal. It is the wheel of fortune.*’ Jorn further developed the Dionysian principle in his article *Apollo or Dionysius*, which began as a defence of the attacks on his review of Erik Lundberg’s book by Torbjörn Olsson. ‘*Olsson’s preconceived sympathies lie within classical idealism; in other words, the defence of ‘Greece’s golden age’ and Apollonian principles, the defence of cool reason and the hegemony of rationalism over life; the mastery of calm deliberation over life, the most irrational philosophy of life that has ever existed - the metaphysical life philosophy.*’ Jorn rejected this philosophy based on rationality in favour of the materialist philosophy, Marxist and Oriental at the same time. More clearly, he rejected the hegemony of rationalism which placed life and humankind in its service. Jorn developed a row of dualisms: between *aristocratic* and *popular* culture, the classic and the romantic, the reflective and the spontaneous, the civilised and the natural, between *calligraphy* and *handwriting*, between *monumentalism* and *the natural rhythm of life*. For Jorn, Apollonian and Dionysian ideals could never *work together* in harmony but would always *work against* each other. He was thus not trying to offer a synthesis, on the contrary, ‘*Dionysian ideals, which, in keeping with human nature, must and shall be the dominant ideal in society.*’¹⁰ In a new, classless society, due to say.

The third article from 1947, *Homes for the People or Concrete Castles in the Air?*, was a critique of Le Corbusier and Functionalism. Le Corbusier equated for Jorn rationalism, and this is in turn ‘*fundamentally the root of classicism*’. Although he wrote in the postscript that Le Corbusier was the master architectonic artist and we were obliged to use his theories as a starting point for our future standpoints, the text was a harsh critique of the old master. In Jorn’s view, the living architecture was consigned to the lower classes and survived only in the homemade designs for the allotment houses despised by

¹⁰ Baumeister 2011 (note 6), 17-21; Asger Jorn, *Yin/Yang*; and idem, *Apollo or Dionysius*, both in: Baumeister 2011, 120-135 and 153-165.

the modernists. Jorn was aware of the requirement of rationalisation and standardisation in the industry as a means to raise the living standards, but warned of its fetishisation into an ‘anti-life romanticism, which glorifies machine technology for its own sake.’ *‘[T]he role of the architect is to liberate the people from the chains to which they have been shackled by the demands of industry and the machine age; just as it was the architect’s historical role to liberate us from the craft guilds and the restrictions they placed on progress,’* explained Jorn. Rationalism’s disregard for the irrational and emotional human needs could be counterbalanced by art, namely Surrealism, whose fascinating interiors could serve as an inspiration for the new architecture. After 1947, in essays like *Dreams and Reality* (1948-49), *Façade Art. Towards a New Architecture* (1951) and *Naturalistic Architecture – Or Natural Form* (1952), Jorn continued his critique of Le Corbusier as a technocratic megalomaniac and purely rational idealist. He virtually made Le Corbusier a scapegoat for most problems of modern architecture.¹¹ In this regard, Jorn was in line with other members of the Situationist International already ten years before the movement was founded. As Simon Sadler pointed out, the Situationists used Le Corbusier ‘*as the whipping boy, laying every ill of rationalism at the feet of the ageing master himself by interpreting him solely on the basis of his interwar work.*’ In Le Corbusier’s postwar work one could actually notice a steady move towards a more humane and organic work. The early postwar works such as the *Unité d’habitation* in Marseille (1947-1952) marked a clear shift from Functionalism and rationalism towards brutalism and organic forms. What Jorn was actually fighting against, was not Le Corbusier, but the postwar reconstruction inspired by his legacy.¹²

Another fight concerning the prewar legacy was the one that Asger Jorn fought about Bauhaus with Max Bill. While the legacy of Bauhaus is a matter of the last chapter of my thesis, Jorn’s discussion with Max Bill is worth noting here. Jorn’s polemics with Bill on the questions of art, architecture and urbanism lasted several years since 1953 and resulted in the anthology *Pour la forme: Ébauche d’une méthodologie des arts* (1958). In 1957, Jorn’s *International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus* merged with the *Lettrist International*, and thus the book was the first publication of the *Situationist International*. As far as architecture was concerned, Jorn continued his critique of Functionalism and proposed an alternative in ‘Counter-Functionalism’. Counter-Functionalism, as Jorn understood it, was Functionalism in its more advanced stage that would provide a

¹¹ Baumeister 2011 (note 6), 22; and Asger Jorn, *Homes for the People or Concrete Castles in the Air?*, in: Baumeister 2011, 136-152.

¹² Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City*, Cambridge, Mass. 1998, 22 and 49-50.

synthesis and a deeper understanding of nature and human needs. One of the means to reach this stage was to free the ludic decorative urges suppressed by Functionalism. Perhaps not surprisingly, Jorn's *International Movement for the Imaginist Bauhaus* has never created any piece of counter-functionalist architecture. His ideal of collaboration between artists and architects was not realised either, and as a result, Jorn gradually withdrew from the architectural discussions. But even though Jorn did not present any counter-functionalist architecture himself, he was able to recognise it in the work of his compatriot Jørn Utzon. The competition entry for the Sydney Opera House, which was reproduced in *Pour la forme*, was for Asger Jorn the beginning of 'the architecture of ambiance'. However, as Nicola Pezolet warned, the expressive and organic architecture as of the Utzon's Sydney Opera House proved to go well with the needs of spectacular capitalism, the main target of criticism of the *Situationist International*. This was proved by the 'recuperation' of the work of Utzon and the likes into a mere style or fashion present in the contemporary architecture since the 1960s.¹³

While it is generally assumed that Jorn hasn't found many Danish allies for his 'counter-Functionalism' nourished by the collaboration of architects and artists, it is interesting to read a short text *Buildings for the recreational purposes* by Esjörn Hiort in the book *Contemporary Danish Architecture* (1958). Hiort evaluated Functionalism as freeing architecture from classical forms on the one hand, but banishing free design from architecture on the other. The result was sterility which in recent years called an interest in free design, Hiort concluded. He also referred to 'the collaboration of arts' as a new slogan shared by artist and architects, however, he distinguished it from a mere reintroduction of an old praxis when artists were called to decorate completed buildings. Rather, Hiort had in mind a collaboration that would start at the beginning, at the phase of planning, and which would place the artistic input on an equal level with the architecture. According to Hiort, it was the advancing standardisation of human lives, that made architects as well as ordinary people 'to realise the man's craving for an artistic experience'. There is no reference to Asger Jorn in Hiort's text, but the similarities are striking. What makes Hiort's text more vague is the fact, that he avoided any examples by solely stating that '[a]rtistic solutions of this problem are unfortunately very rare.' But there is also a flip side of similarity to Jorn: the problem of art-architecture synthesis was, according to Hiort, especially central in architecture housing theatres, cinemas, amusement parks and the like.

¹³ Nicola Pezolet, *Bauhaus Ideas: Jorn, Max Bill, and Reconstruction Culture*, in: *October* 141 (Summer 2012), 87 and 106-110.

*‘When people ‘go out’ they want to be amused and this demand very definitely concerns architecture.’*¹⁴ From this words, one could conclude, as Nicola Pezolet in case of the Sydney Opera House, that the development towards the ‘counter-functionalist’ art-architecture synthesis was in danger of not fulfilling human needs in places such as community or culture centres, but being deployed in places of amusement and spectacle.

* * *

If we consider the situation around 1947 in Czechoslovakia, the competition for the National Assembly building offers a good departure point and a good counterpart to the postwar assessments of the Aarhus City Hall in Denmark. The competition was important from many regards, politically, it should have corrected the state from the interwar period, when the young republic was not able to materialise its democracy in a new building of a parliament. For the functionalist architects, the competition offered a chance to redirect their efforts from a mainly private clientele to a public project, and hence cement their position as the architects of the new postwar establishment of people’s democracy. Yet, their hopes were not fulfilled, since the competition did not deliver any convincing results.

A thorough account of the competition by Oldřich Starý (1884-1971) was published in the magazine *Architektura ČSR* in 1947. From among the competition entries, Starý energetically rejected those reproducing historicism and looking back either to the Czech 19th century architecture or to the Classicism of Friedrich Schinkel. The building of the new parliament of the people’s democratic republic had to come out of the times and its culture and technology. It could not bear a *‘false mask of the past times, when people were different,’* wrote Starý. When looking on the competition results in general, he was pleased by the urbanist part but discontent regarding the architecture. Yet, in some projects, he could recognise a promise of the future path. Classifying the entries, there were roughly two approaches: first, the attempts at monumentality, sometimes *‘ostentatious and non-contemporary’*; and second, the attempts at *‘a certain cultivated modesty, unpretentious and civil, reminding especially the architecture of the Nordic countries.’* It was in these that Starý saw *‘a new and open path of the development.’* But there was also a third kind of projects that Starý mentioned, without realising that it was those that were showing towards the actual future development in Czechoslovakia: *‘contrived design flooded with*

¹⁴ Esjörn Hiort, Buildings for the recreational purposes, in: Finn Monies and Bent Røgind, eds., Contemporary Danish Architecture, København 1958, 53.

all possible architectural junk where all the attention is devoted to the pursuit of the most antiquated impression while neglecting all other aspects.' It was surprising, Starý continued, that these kind of proposals were becoming frequent in the recent competitions, something unheard of in the interwar period; moreover, they were acclaimed by some magazines—a testimony of the utmost disorientation of the public opinion. But the disorientation was a more general condition felt not only among the public but also among the architects. The competition ended with no winning proposal and the jury awarded instead three second prizes to the teams of František Čermák—Gustav Paul, Jaroslav Fragner—Vincenc Makovský and Jan Víšek—J. Grunt—A. Zavřel.¹⁵ All the projects, none of which got ever realised, stood on various places on a scale between Functionalism and Classicism. The moral of the competition seemed to be that *'the fusion of Functionalism and Classicism led almost never to a fruitful synthesis, but rather to a unfruitful compromise,'* as Rostislav Švácha wrote, and the projects which best dealt with the competition, like the entry by Jindřich Krise, totally abandoned the functionalist forms.¹⁶

But as in Denmark, far not everyone was willing to let Functionalism go. Especially not its main advocate, theoretician Karel Teige (1900-1951). In his unpublished handwritten text titled *Functionalism* (1947), Teige wrote: *'Functionalism is an approach, opinion and working method, which concerns a broader field of activity than just the field of art. It is an approach opposite to formalism.'* Functionalism gives priority to function and form is only secondary, and as Teige explained on the example of typography, it is the opposite of Classicism and decorativism. Teige's views on Functionalism in architecture were expressed separately in a text *Modern Architecture in Czechoslovakia* written for a special issue of the magazine *Československo* in 1947. The brochure published in English and French is actually an overview of the development of Czech architecture since the 19th century written primarily for a foreign public. It was also a rehabilitation of Art Nouveau, from which Functionalism could take a lesson concerning the psychological appeal of architecture, as Teige concluded. But if Art Nouveau was forgiven, the same could not have been said of the modernised Classicism of the Czech students of Otto Wagner, *'completely foreign to the spirit of today's life'*. Regarding Functionalism, Teige incorporated parts of the above-mentioned handwritten text in his study and stressed that any prior aesthetic form in architecture was unacceptable, and thus architecture was a

¹⁵ Oldřich Starý, Poznámky k soutěži na budovu Národního shromáždění, in: *Architektura ČSR, 1947*, 197-207.

¹⁶ Rostislav Švácha, *Architektura čtyřicátých let*, in: Rostislav Švácha, Marie Platovská, eds., *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění V (1939-1958)*, Praha 2005, 67.

science rather than art or craft. But the scientific architecture is not limited only to the practical and utilitarian concerns, writes Teige, it shall not be forgotten that there is also the aesthetic function applied by the artistic means. And since both art and science (here architecture) strive for knowledge, we should not separate the two by impermeable barriers. The term 'architecture', previously burdened with monumentality as an expression of the class dominance, is today becoming a symbol and synthetic expression of the social work of organisation - '*Architecture is becoming a creation and organisation of the living environment.*' In the conclusion, Teige expressed his hopes that the new social structure of the republic entering socialism would allow functionalist architecture to create works born out of an idea in which science meets poetry and which would model the shape of the free life of the new society.¹⁷

If Asger Jorn criticised Functionalism from a certain Surrealist position, Teige managed to sit on two chairs in this regard. Already in 1923-1924, he formulated a theory of complementarity of *Poetism* and Constructivism, where *Poetism* (later Surrealism) was oriented on the satisfaction of the emotive needs (arts), while Constructivism (later Functionalism) held responsible for the rational requirements (architecture as a science). Although some avant-garde architects such as Jaromír Krejcar rejected this division, others, such as Jan Gillar, Jiří Kroha, Ladislav Žák or the architects of the PAS Group (Karel Janů, Jiří Štursa and Jiří Voženílek) adopted this concept during the 1930s. At the same time, Teige joined the *Group of Surrealists in Czechoslovakia* in 1934 and after Breton's lecture in Prague the following year, he corrected his previous position in order to take on board the aesthetic and psychological function of architecture. Neglecting of these irrational aspects was for Teige the reason of the failure of the Soviet Constructivist Avant-garde, on which he wrote the book *Soviet Architecture* in 1936. This, however, did not mean that Teige and his followers would abandon the scientific notion of architecture. On the contrary, even the psychological needs needed to be studied scientifically. From among the architects of Teige's circle who have remained close to Surrealism, I would like to pay more attention to Ladislav Žák and Jiří Kroha, who have both moved away from Functionalism during 1940s. After ten years of abstaining from writing on architecture, Teige returned to it not only in the above-discussed study *Modern architecture in Czechoslovakia*, but also in the *Preface on architecture and nature* for the book *Habitable Landscape* (1947) by Ladislav Žák (1900-1973). This text was, according to Rostislav

¹⁷ Karel Teige, *Moderní architektura v Československu*, in: Jiří Brabenec and Vratislav Effenberger, eds., *Karel Teige: Výbor z díla III, Osvobozování života a poezie*, Praha 1994, 186-234.

Švách, Teige's most extensive and most important surrealist text on architecture.¹⁸

The architecture is separating the man from the nature, meant Teige. When the building transforms into architecture, an instrument transforms into a monument, and hence the building alienates itself from both man and nature and negates life—as the ancient tombs and temples did. This transformations ran for Teige parallel with the transformation of the human race from the initial communism of the original paradise, lost by the foundation of the state and the emergence of the stratified society. For Teige, it was important to transfer this idea of the original paradise present in the 'psychoideology' of the oppressed classes from the past into the future, and thus to reinstall the paradise by the abolition of the state and establishment of a new classless society. '*Architecture and architectonical style are the physiognomy of the ruling class, monumentality is the negation of the nature, of the human nature, and of the freedom;*' wrote Teige, and thus: '*It is only the end of the architecture style and the monumentality that came about with the French revolution, that is making space for free life.*' The French revolution was, however, just the beginning of the end of the class society and also the beginning of the new approaching towards the nature as seen by J. J. Rousseau. This development was yet in the meantime suppressed by the emergence of the capitalist 'vampire-city, spider-city' with its peripheries. Neither Le Corbusier was able to substantially address the contradiction between the city and the countryside in his projects which, according to Teige, expected the continuation of the 'ultra-imperialism'. Thus, even though the future socialist organisation of life would draw on Le Corbusier's rich activities, it would not confirm his prognosis which addressed the city within the frame of capitalism. Instead, Teige reminds us of Charles Fourier's *Phalanstères* set freely in the natural surrounding. Another source of inspiration for Teige, as for Ladislav Žák and Le Corbusier, was the tub of Diogenes—a symbol of freeing oneself of all unnecessary and superfluous in favour of leisure, the main product of the automatised production. The regained time was envisioned to be spent by play, contemplation or concentration; either in cities turned into cultural centres, or—preferably—in nature turned into a true 'habitable landscape'.¹⁹

For the creation of his habitable landscape Žák departed from the English park composed of the elements of Czech and Central European landscape. In the first place, his book aimed to serve as a manual for using the landscape, by regulating the zones reserved for e.g. industry or total protection. For Teige as well as for Žák, it was important to save

¹⁸ Rostislav Švách, Surrealism and Czech Functionalism, in: Umění LV, 2007, 316-328.

¹⁹ Karel Teige, Předmluva o architektuře a přírodě, in: Ladislav Žák, Obytná Krajina, Praha 1947, 7-21.

the landscape from a vulgar utilitarian pseudo-constructivist architecture which saw man as a 'normal economic individual', ignoring his psyche. Žák's vision was, on the contrary, a chance to overcome the contradictions—of the city and the countryside, civilisation and nature, labour and leisure, activity and passivity—by not suppressing one in favour of the other, but by their harmonious synthesis that would reunite the split human existence. And when the extensive parts of the country would be re-naturalised, some parts could be formed by the poetic imagination. Here the modern sculpture could, according to Teige, find its place when it would free itself from the pompous and monumental tasks of decorating architecture. Instead, it would be allowed to remodel certain parts of the park-like landscape into *'autonomous fantastic units made of stone, vegetation and water, realising the poetic space in the natural space, mythised nature.'* The nature would become a picture of the poetic imagination. *'The natural reality regained by the re-naturalisation (...), will be enhanced by the poetic surreality,'* explained Teige and continued: *'What matters today is to make the country and the nature into a human dwelling without any palaces, temples, architecture.'* The natural parks would be supplied with a new kind of park, which could be called *'a surrealist environment, a surrealist landscape'*. Žák's book was heading, according to Teige, to overcoming of the contradiction between the technology and the nature through a synthesis in which it would be the technology itself that would return the man to *'his most intimate cohabitation with nature, to a new TAO'*. Teige, for similar ends than Jorn, placed the Chinese philosophy as an example of the union between the nature and the culture preceding J. J. Rousseau by one thousand years: *'From Tao to surreality the same desire to live in the real world the deepest human poem.'* In the very end of his text, Teige fought against the capitalist civilisation subduing the man to the machine, against architecture which created homes for mechanised humans, in contrast to which stood Ladislav Žák's book built on a socialist stance requiring adjustments of the industrial system to the needs of the human, rather than the opposite practiced by the capitalism or the romanticist rejection of the machine. *'The work of Ladislav Žák is a road marker of the way in which the technological culture and poetic thought will liberate both man and nature through correspondence of man and nature in a socialist order,'* concluded Teige and finished his text by a call: *'From utopia to science, through science to reality.'*²⁰

Paradoxically, Ladislav Žák's first postwar work was a monument to the dead. Yet, Žák attempted to create a different kind of monument than those derived from the

²⁰ Ibidem.

antiquity, and his preference of the vernacular architecture and the landscape over Functionalism got a chance to realise itself in the monument for the victims of the Nazi terror in the village of Ležáky burnt down in 1942. Žák began to work on the project in 1946 and already a year later he could present his first proposal. The burnt down houses were reminded by low walls filled with soil and hence creating horizontal plateaus of 'house-graves'. These were topped by trapezoidal stone blocks with cross-shaped cuts through in their middle. The same motif was to be repeated on the chapel intended for the commemoration of the victims. From the project's inception, Žák was thinking of an artistic centre of gravity with a sculptural group by Karel Dvořák, and a thorough park-like layout of the area. Artworks by other artists such as Marta Jirásková-Havlíčková and Vladimír Sychra were also commissioned, but remained in the state of studies. What was most important for the project for Ležáky, as Dita Dvořáková observed, was that any sense of Classicism was absent. Instead, Dvořáková places the work Žák in the context of the monumentality as developed by the trio of S. Giedion, F. Léger and J. L. Sert in their manifesto *Nine Points on Monumentality* of 1943. In the interior of the planned chapel, Žák also showed a certain tendency towards scenography. The space was supposed to be divided by a glass wall with a painting of 'the assumption of the martyrs' hovering towards the 'sun'—an artificial spotlight covered by opal glass. However, the monument of Ležáky remained a torso of what Žák had intended. In April 1948 he was forced to donate his project to the Society for the Reconstruction of Lidice (Lidice was the other of two villages burned down by the Nazis, which was to be—unlike Ležáky—reconstructed and inhabited), to which he handed in his projects, keeping only the right for the architectural supervision. A large part of the project was finished under his supervision in the years 1949-1952, although already in 1950 he had to face criticism from Oldřich Starý in *Architektura ČSR*. The same man who criticised the pompousness of the projects for the National Assembly in 1947 now criticised the monument in Ležáky for being too 'sentimental, cemetery-like and naturalist' lacking the stress on the '*revolutionary nature of the real, deliberate resistance of the [politically] conscious village.*' Due to the political pressure, Žák would only return to the project in years 1955-1957 and supervise some of the works until 1960.²¹

If Žák was dreaming of the 'nationalisation' of the architects and artist after 1948, this became true for another architect close to Teige and Surrealism, namely Jiří Kroha (1893-1974).²² Unlike Žák, who was fighting against the new regime's economic

²¹ Dita Dvořáková, Ladislav Žák, Řevnice 2013, 95-111; and O. [Oldřich Starý], Poznámka, *Architektura ČSR* IX, 1950, 95.

²² Dita Dvořáková-Robová, Z dopisů Ladislava Žáka Karlu Honzíkovi, in: *Umění* XLIX, 2001, 451.

technocracy focused on heavy industry from the position of his '*pan-naturalist socialism*', Kroha proved to be loyal to the Communist Party.²³ Since 1945, he gave speeches at architects' gatherings and published essays on socialist architecture. In his architectural designs, however, he barely went beyond late Functionalism enriched with few folklorist elements. An opportunity to come up with something completely new came in autumn 1947, when Kroha was, on a direct initiative of (already Communist) Minister of the agriculture, appointed the designer general of the *Slavic Agricultural Exhibition* in Prague planned for 1948. The design for the exhibition was a fantastic patchwork of all current styles and Kroha himself wrote about the project that it had brought together advocates of all the contemporaneous trends, 'from surrealists to the most realistic artists'. He engaged tens of painters and sculptors in order to create a comprehensible interpretation of the message by the Ministry: the rationalisation and mechanisation of the agriculture.²⁴ For Rostislav Švácha, Kroha's design was as much 'a huge Surrealist kitsch' as it was 'the last echo of the illusion of a possible synthesis of Surrealism and Socialist realism' envisioned by Karel Teige and the poet Vítězslav Nezval in the mid-1930s. Švácha also proposed a link between the exhibition design of Kroha and those of Frederick Kiesler for the Surrealist exhibitions, yet, we have no records proving the two architects knowing about each other.²⁵ In his later projects for the official exhibitions, however, Kroha was steadily moving towards fulfilling the requirements of the Communist Party. In 1948, he was awarded the title of the National Artist and his studio became the only independent one within the *Stavoprojekt*, the state run system of architecture offices. Kroha's studio was dealing with many prominent commissions, until it was closed down in 1956 when he was forced to retire. This was not so much a result of a denunciation letter from a former employee addressed to the Party officials, as a result of the transformation taking place within the *Stavoprojekt* when the technocrats regained some of the power they had lost during the years of Stalinism. This happened in line with the critique of the cult of the personality, which Kroha represented in the realm of Czech architecture.²⁶

²³ Dvořáková 2013 (note 21), 113-118; and Ladislav Žák, Česká krajina po roce 1945, in: *Architekt XLVI*, 1948, 153.

²⁴ Martin Strakoš, On the Road to Socialist Realism, Kroha's Architecture in the 1940s, in: Marcela Macharáčková, ed., Jiří Kroha (1893-1974): architect, artist, designer, theoretician, a 20th century metamorphosis, Brno 2007, 306-311.

²⁵ Rostislav Švácha, Against the Tide: Kroha's Surrealist Fling, in: Macharáčková 2007 (note 24), 277; and Švácha 2007 (note 18), 325.

²⁶ Strakoš 2007; and Kimberly Elman Zarecor, Stavoprojekt and the Atelier of National Artist Jiří Kroha in the 1950s, both in: Macharáčková 2007 (note 24), 313 and 330-333.

Ladislav Žák and Jiří Kroha represent two extreme poles of where Functionalism of the 1930s could develop under the influences of Surrealism. However different from each other their works were, with Žák's negation of the architecture in favour of the landscape and Kroha's preference for propaganda at the expense of the architecture, they both shared a certain romantic resistance to the industrial technocracy of 1950s which swept most of the architects of the younger generation. Also, when trying to find texts which would best fit to those of Asger Jorn, we end up in the realm of the generation most connected to the interwar avant-garde. It is a pity that Jindřich Heisler, a generational peer of Asger Jorn, did not write any texts on architecture despite the fact that he was in touch with the most famous architect close to Surrealism, Frederick Kiesler. As far as we know, their discussions, at least in the letters to which I will return in the Chapter 3, did not concern architecture.²⁷ Heisler, like many of his peers, respected Teige, so the clashes or sympathies were of course not always given by belonging to a certain generation or other. Both Karel Teige and Asger Jorn wanted to restore the lost paradise in the future classless society, they agreed on the rejection of the monumentality and shared openness to Surrealism as a counterpart to Functionalism. But while Jorn preferred collapsing the two in a synthesis, Teige opted for sustaining the tension between the two. This is best shown on their respective criticism towards Le Corbusier. While for Jorn Le Corbusier was a rationalist monster, for Teige there was too much art for an architect-scientist in Le Corbusier. What Teige and Jorn would definitely disagree on was the question of a synthesis of arts, as I will show in the Chapter 4 devoted to the legacy of Bauhaus.

* * *

From the texts analysed here, we can conclude that both in Denmark and Czechoslovakia the situation of Functionalism after the WWII was rather similar. Despite the revival of the International Style in the late 1950s, in the late 1940s almost everyone would agree on the fact that the era of Functionalism was over but none was able to produce an alternative yet. Still, Functionalism has never been totally rejected, in the main part it was understood as a good departure point from which a new, more sophisticated architecture would emerge. An architecture, that would take into account both the psychological human needs and the nature. This would be agreed on by both younger and older generation architects. Even in Czechoslovakia, where the modern architecture development was cut off by the Socialist historicism, the actual continuity could be found in the architects rather than in the styles.

²⁷ Deset dopisů Jindřicha Heislera Fredericku Kieslerovi, in: František Šmejkal, ed., Jindřich Heisler: Z kasemat spánku, Praha 1999, 319-331.

Chapter 2: Towards ‘Counter-Functionalism’

While the previous chapter was dedicated to the discussions of Functionalism and its criticism from various standpoints, the following chapter will mainly present the work of two architects who tried to take on board the lesson of Functionalism and bring it into the postwar period by enriching it by non-modern yet also non-classicist sources. These architects are the world-wide acclaimed Dane Jørn Utzon and virtually unknown Czech architect Zdeněk Plesník. Rather than comparing their work to each other, I was more interested in comparing their position and the position of the architecture they represented in regard to the architectural issues actual in Denmark and Czechoslovakia respectively. Their relationship to the older generation architects, itself non-homogenous, was of a special interest to me too.

If Jørn Utzon managed to design a counter-functionalist architecture in Asger Jørn's view—as I noted in the Chapter 1—, then, what was the genesis of his achievement? Utzon studied at the School of Architecture of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts under S. E. Rasmussen and Kay Fisker, finishing in 1942, but he had little interest in the classical tradition of his teachers. Rather, he was fascinated by vernacular architecture and natural forms, and since his young age, he had, through his uncle Einar Utzon-Frank, access to an extensive library and art collection including art of the Middle and Far East. Utzon-Frank also owned a copy of a 1925 reprint of the *Ying Tsao Fa Shi*, an over eight hundred years old Chinese building manual. Utzon would later buy a copy himself on his first visit to China in 1958 and it could be seen in the office in Sydney, where it served as a metaphor for the efforts to systematise the construction of the Sydney Opera House. In Stockholm, where he fled in 1942 from Denmark occupied by the Nazis, Utzon also acquired Osvald Sirén's *Chinese Art during Three Millennia* (1942), and J. Prip-Møller's study of the Chinese Buddhist monasteries. He gave copies of these books, together with Karl Blossfeldt's *Wunder in der Natur*, a catalogue of an exhibition on rural architecture held at the Milan Triennale in 1937, and Hans Ludwig Oeser's *Wunder der Grossen und Kleinen Welt*, also to his friend, architect Tobias Faber. After they returned back to Denmark (in 1945 Utzon briefly worked also for Alvar Aalto), Utzon and Faber would translate their fascination with the world of nature and Orient into a manifesto-like text *Trends in Architecture of Today* published in *Arkitekten* in 1947. The text was an attempt to surpass the discussions about Functionalism and architecture which either returned before Functionalism or ended up as formalism by trying to develop it as a style. Instead, Utzon

and Faber proposed to get inspired by the vernacular architecture and the nature, two sources which they considered the most authentic.²⁸ It is not surprising that Asger Jorn expressed an interest in meeting Utzon as early as in 1948, although, as Tobias Faber recalled, Jorn's texts were too theoretical to have interested Utzon. While often opaque theory contradicted Jorn's concept of spontaneity, Utzon compensated his spontaneity by a sense of practicality. As Richard Weston pointed out, Utzon always aimed to capture the structural idea in a spontaneous sketch, uniting thus thought and construction.²⁹

Utzon could soon pursue his interest in non-Western cultures by travels. In 1948 he would travel to Morocco and a year later he was awarded a scholarship to the U.S.A., where he met with Frank Lloyd Wright. From there he travelled to Yucatán to explore the Maya pyramids. Some ten years later, on his way to Sydney in 1958, Utzon visited China, Nepal, India and Japan. But for Utzon's part, it was not exoticism which brought him outside Europe. He showed an equal admiration towards the anonymous European vernacular architecture as to the non-Western. This kind of architecture can also be seen as pre-capitalist, but it is hard to say if Utzon's romanticism was at this point more escapist or revolutionary. The clear interest in the material and construction rather than decoration could perhaps be an expression of the latter. In fact, the interest in the ancient and vernacular architecture was connecting Utzon also to Le Corbusier. As Richard Weston revealed, although little discussed, Le Corbusier had a considerable influence on Utzon. Unlike Asger Jorn, who was blind to Le Corbusier's postwar development, Utzon shared with Le Corbusier a belief that the new impulses for the postwar architecture lay in a better understanding of the ancient civilisations and primitive cultures.³⁰ Moreover, Utzon's 'creative credo,' *The Innermost Being of Architecture*, published in 1948, reflected many themes of Le Corbusier's *Quand les cathédrales étaient blanches*, published in English in 1947. As Weston pointed out, Utzon approached Le Corbusier in 1958 with a letter inviting him to contribute with large-scale decorations to the interior of the Sydney Opera House, which Le Corbusier accepted. The two of them also met a year later, but due to delays in the project and Le Corbusier's death the commission came to nothing.³¹

In 1948, the magazine *Arkitekten* published a manifesto *Monumentality – a human necessity* written in 1943 by Sigfried Giedion, Fernand Léger and I.L. Sert. In nine points,

²⁸ Weston 2008 (note 3), 18-22.

²⁹ Ibidem, 25.

³⁰ Richard Weston, Platform and Plateaux in Utzon's Architecture, in: Michael Juul Holm, Kjeld Kjeldsen and Mette Marcus, eds., Jørn Utzon – The Architect's Universe, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art 2008, 32.

³¹ Weston 2008 (note 3), 28-30.

the authors, for whom the misuse of the monumental vocabulary by the dictatorial regimes was not a reason to reject the monumentality as such, pleaded for the reinvention of the monumentality in a democratic sense. In fact, their manifesto was another contribution to the critique of Functionalism's exhaustion into sterility.³² In 1950, also in the magazine *Arkitekten*, Kay Fisker summed up the international critical debate on Functionalism. Fisker (1893-1965) stood in clear opposition to Giedion, who mocked the New Empiricism, promoted by Fisker, as 'the new escapism'. In line with e.g. Thomas Creighton, the editor of *Progressive Architecture*, Fisker hoped that the new monuments of the postwar period would be housing and public utilitarian buildings, such as schools and hospitals instead of '*palaces, temples and triumphal arches for emperors, aristocrats or for Nazi and Fascist gangs.*' Neither the international debate on monumentalism and sterility of Functionalism, nor the new empiricism or even 'marxist architecture', however, triggered larger reactions on the pages of *Arkitekten*.³³ Yet, the discussion followed in praxis.

In 1953, the theme of monumentality returned in the competition for a new *Langelinie* pavilion in Copenhagen. The attractive site drawn a large participation; yet the jury, consisting among others of Arne Jacobsen, Mogens Lassen and Hans J. Wegner, unanimously agreed on the entry by Eva and Nils Koppel (1916-2006 and 1914-2009).³⁴ Merete Ahnfeldt-Møllerup described the competition as '*a kind of mythical event in Danish architecture*', since it was the first time that '*Utzon's genius was revealed to the full, and this was where one saw for the first time the failure to appreciate his genius that was to become a pattern in Utzon's dramatic career.*' Most of the competition entries were designed in the International Style, as well as the winning project by the Koppels. On the contrary, Utzon came up with a rather monumental and organically expressive proposal. The reservations of the jury might have been both practical and ideological. Utzon's proposal would have been complicated, and perhaps expensive, to both build and use. Besides, Utzon clearly aimed to create a self-conscious landmark, a monument. And it is clear, that when it came to monumentality, the jury was more in line with Kay Fisker than Sigfried Giedion. The conflict of these two positions was a conflict between the social and the monumental. As Ahnfeldt-Møllerup concluded, '*more anonymous architecture that was chosen represented an 'open' view of society and a social and democratic approach that was not to be found in Utzon's landmark.*' The architecture of the new democratic

³² Jørgen Hegner Christiansen, Koldkrigstid og fremtidstro (1948-1956), in: Kim Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Lene Dammand Lund, Lars Nevald, eds., *Arkitekten – 100 år*, København 1998, 88.

³³ Ibidem 92.

³⁴ Kim Dirckinck-Holmfeld, *Langelinie pavilion*, Competition proposal, 1954, in: Martin Keiding and Kim Dirckinck-Holmfeld, eds., *Utzon and the New Tradition*, Copenhagen 2005, 56-58.

collectivity was supposed to be simple and unassuming, while universally accessible through industrial prefabrication as represented in the International Style.³⁵ Yet, this was also the qualities that Utzon was aiming at: the architecture that would be more accessible to general public reached by overcoming the division between the modern and traditional architecture. Similarly, his design for the *Langelinie* pavilion was both inspired by an ancient form of a Chinese pagoda as by the Johnson Wax laboratory tower at Racine (1947) by F. L. Wright. As Kenneth Frampton compared, Utzon's goal was '*a popularly accessible work in much the same spirit as that which informed Arne Jacobsen's SAS complex in Copenhagen of 1956*'.³⁶ That Jacobsen and Utzon did not stand as far from each other around 1953 as it might seem is more clear when it comes to their housing projects from the early 1950s. In 1953, in a competition for a new type of family house for Scania, Utzon first designed the courtyard-style family houses that he later developed in Elsinore and Fredensborg. He drew inspiration from regional vernacular and anonymous architecture of Mediterranean countries, as well as Mexico, China and Japan.³⁷ At the same time, Jacobsen was also perhaps closest to a version of regional modernism in his brick houses with pitched roofs, best exemplified in three stages of Søholm Row Houses (1945-1954).³⁸

Jacobsen, however, was not about to stick to the brick regionalism for long. In 1958, Esjörn Hiort could again put Jacobsen in a direct opposition to Kay Fisker when comparing Rødovre Town Hall (1956) of the former to the Mothers' Aid Centre (1954) of the latter.³⁹ Rødovre Town Hall was, together with the SAS Royal Hotel (1956-61), Jacobsen's most celebrated work in the International Style. Although not exceptionally original, they became famous for their elaborate details, palette, and the delicacy of the curtain wall's modular grid. Especially in the case of Rødovre Town Hall Jacobsen's use of the International style characterised by the modular grid was very similar to some of Eero Saarinen's projects, which was the reason why its originality was questioned. However, Saarinen himself saw Jacobsen's Rødovre Town Hall just after its completion and appraised it from the whole down to the details rejecting the question of plagiarism as senseless.⁴⁰ Saarinen's assessment of Jacobsen's work is especially interesting in

³⁵ Merete Ahnfeldt-Møllerup, *A Different City – the Unrealized Copenhagen Projects*, in: Juul-Holm, Kjeldsen and Marcus 2008 (note 30), 24-25.

³⁶ Kenneth Frampton, *Between Artifice and Nature*, in: Juul-Holm, Kjeldsen and Marcus 2008 (note 30), 18.

³⁷ Tobias Faber, *Jørn Utzon – Houses in Fredensborg*, Hong Kong 1991, 6.

³⁸ Thau and Vindum 2001 (note 1), 294-335.

³⁹ Esjörn Hiort, *Public buildings*, in: Monies and Røgind 1958 (note 14), 69.

⁴⁰ *Det tredje rådhus – og det bedste*, *Demokraten*, 9. 6. 1956. Cited in Thau and Vindum 2001 (note 1), 162.

connection to the role that Saarinen played one year later in choosing Utzon's competition project for the Sydney Opera House. There is also another link between the Sydney Opera House, that will be discussed later, and Jacobsen's work around 1956. Both Rødovre Town Hall and the SAS Royal Hotel were the most important examples of Jacobsen's tendency towards a total work of art. In the SAS hotel, Jacobsen created a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Everything in the building such as furniture, textiles, or the cutlery in the restaurant was designed by Jacobsen.⁴¹ The tendency towards a *Gesamtkunstwerk* was no less clear in Utzon's Sydney Opera House. Esjörn Hiort described this concept of overall design as something characteristic of the Danish building practice, which he explained as a direct legacy of Functionalism with its demand of form in agreement with function.⁴²

Today, Jørn Utzon is considered one of the most original architects of the 20th century. Philip Drew highlighted Utzon's role in breaking out '*the functionalist straitjacket to show that the buildings could be romantic and expressive*', alongside his '*rethinking of the industrial prefabrication of standard elements to produce complex forms that depart from the strict rectangular order of Mies van der Rohe and his generation*.'⁴³ The question of the generation shift was central, since Sigfried Giedion made Utzon the key figure of his notion of the 'third generation'. This was formulated to define a new generation of architects departing from modernism who, although abandoning the belief in the utopian visions, still believed that the role of architect was to provide the society with models and methods that could be adopted when solving the problems of the everyday life at large.⁴⁴ The design for the Sydney Opera House was, as Martin Keiding articulated, a promise of the future role of architect as dominant in the building process, a promise highly needed in times when the building industry seemed to treat the architects as puppets.⁴⁵ Hence, it is not surprising that Giedion had chosen Utzon as a main character in his concept of the third generation. According to Martin Keiding and Kim Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Siegfried Giedion was looking for an architect as Utzon to protect the entire modern project from collapsing. Giedion, quite similarly to Asger Jorn as featured in the Chapter 1, became already during the war years aware of the fact that the inclusion of the irrational, artistic and humane was perhaps the only way how to save modernism from the ultimate formalist and ideological exhaustion.

⁴¹ Thau and Vindum 2001 (note 1), 153-154, 157 and 162.

⁴² Esjörn Hiort, Interiors and furniture, in: Monies and Røgind 1958 (note 14), 61.

⁴³ Philip Drew, Sydney Opera House by Jørn Utzon, London 1995, 23.

⁴⁴ Frampton 2008 (note 36), 21.

⁴⁵ Martin Keiding, Sydney Opera House, 1957-1973, in: Keiding and Dirckinck-Holmfeld 2005 (note 34), 78.

Sigfried Giedion (1888-1968) characterised the third generation in eight points. Among them, the last three are of the interest here: a stronger relation to the past, further strengthening of the sculptural tendencies, and the right of expression above pure function. Regarding the relation to the past, this was not to be expressed in forms but rather in the sense of an inner relationship and a desire for continuity. Giedion warned of playing with historic details torn out of their context as mere decorative features. This did not lead to a relationship to tradition or to the past but to '*a decadent architecture that delights the public and the press,*' wrote Giedion. His main argument was that such architecture had no contact with the contemporary society. Although he named the Lincoln Center in New York as one example, the architecture of the Socialist historicism would be another example of this populist usage of the past. On the contrary, the architects of the third generation looked towards the anonymous structures '*which are everywhere living bonds with the past.*' A third generation architect was concerned with '*searching through previous architectonic knowledge, so that he can immediately confront contemporary architectural aims with those of a former period. Travel gives the best possibility for such immediate questioning,*' maintained Giedion.⁴⁶

In a certain sense, it was also Utzon's physical or mental travels to the ancient China that has provided guidelines for developing what Giedion termed as a double gift of the better architects of the third generation: the ability to connect with the nature and the past, and at the same time the control over contemporary methods of industrialised production—especially prefabrication. Prefabrication was of great importance to Giedion, because if '*[t]he autonomous right of expression must again assert itself in building, over and above the purely utilitarian,*' then '*the primacy of expression must always be achieved through the contemporary technical possibilities.*'⁴⁷ Giedion's conclusion is thus close to that of Asger Jorn: '*the machine has to be subordinated to the creative process, not the creative process to the machine.*' The question that opens for me is, to which extent could one identify Giedion's third generation with Jorn's concept of 'counter-Functionalism'. The stumbling stone might be, that although Giedion wrote that '*[t]he buildings of primitive peoples are often closer to the architect of today than those of later cultures,*' it has to be acknowledged that the inspiration of most architects lay more than in the actual primitive ur-communist cultures in the architecture of the highly hierarchical ancient civilisations.

⁴⁶ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture, The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge, Mass. 2008, 668-670; and in: Keiding and Dirckinck-Holmfeld 2005 (note 34), 18.

⁴⁷ Giedion 2008 (note 46), 673 and 678.

By inserting a chapter on the work of Jørn Utzon into the fifth edition of his *Space, Time and Architecture*, Sigfried Giedion, according to Philip Drew, announced Utzon's candidacy as Le Corbusier's successor to the leadership of the modern architecture in Europe. Unlike some of his no less famous peers, Utzon did not take part in the disbandment of CIAM, which was for Giedion an important aspect of the continuity of the modern architecture, which Utzon also proved by his preservation of a balance between the reason and the feeling. The first generation's rigid rationalistic bias was not fully abandoned, but complemented with something new—a concept of the natural order, which in its result united rational construction with a sense of unconscious longing for the unity. In my understanding, it is a shift from the outer rationalist and anthropocentric logics imposed on the environment towards the inner logics of things that is still rational, but not in a sense that can be reduced to the human reason solely. Philip Drew summed this up in relation of the third generation towards the environment: *'The third generation acquired an organic outlook which involved taking instructions from the environment instead of enforcing preconceived rationalistic structures on it.'* The precedents of such architecture were thus not to be found in self-conscious or even authoritarian modernism, but in what Philip Drew called the 'unselfconscious architecture,' which was according to him crucial for architects as Utzon in reestablishing contact with the organic domain of environmental structure. Thus, in his upgrading of modernism, Utzon did not aim for a rampant individual expression; instead, he substituted it with an anonymous expression of the collective consciousness and symbiosis with landscape. This right of the anonymous expression was reasserted beyond the purely utilitarian, in defiance of the first generation's functional puritanism, believed Drew.⁴⁸ However, this statements can be confusing too: are the individual expression and anonymous expression always mutually exclusive? And in cases of e.g. the competition proposal for the *Langelinie* pavilion or the Sydney Opera House, do we consider them more as a manifestation of the individual expression or of the collectively shared unconsciousness? In fact, the latter is more true of the housing projects designed by Utzon, while the more representative projects are clearly marked by an individual signature. Yet, also these projects grow out of the inner logics rather than arbitrariness often characteristic of the iconic architecture of the later decades.

* * *

⁴⁸ Philip Drew, *Third Generation: The Changing Meaning of Architecture*, Praeger 1972, 44-45.

If we move to the reality of Czechoslovakia of the 1950s, my question is: Can we speak of any architects of the third generation in Giedion's sense? I think that we should try to. The Czech architects had, of course, different problems around 1953 than their Danish colleagues dealing with the *Langelinie* pavilion competition, or than the architects at the CIAM congress in Aix-en-Provence where the younger architects of the Team 10 came into prominence for the first time. But actually, the question was the same for all: in which style, or, how to build? What was to come after Functionalism? In Czechoslovakia, this question became extremely pressing at the *First national conference of the delegates of Czechoslovak architects* in 1953. The aim of the conference was to set a new programme for the newly established Architect's Union. The Socialist realism has been already widely discussed, but it was first this conference that made it a dogma that the architects had to follow. Still, it was not clear, what such a style should actually look like. The keynote speakers were Jaroslav Fragner (1898-1967) and Jiří Voženílek (1909-1986) and their papers dealt with the ideology and economy of the architecture respectively. At the same time, they also set the new criteria for assessment of the past. This mainly meant, that the architects with an avant-garde past—including architects such as Oldřich Starý or Jiří Kroha—had to confess from their 'sins of cosmopolitanism' or Trotskyism in public self-critiques. But the programme of the conference went beyond this humiliating procedure. One of the interesting issues raised at the conference were the complaints about the specialisation and growing isolation of the building disciplines, among which architecture was often assigned a subordinated position. Besides the exceptions such as the Studio of the National Artist Jiří Kroha, an ordinary Czech architect had to fight the problems of his discipline from a similarly disadvantageous positions as elsewhere in the West. Even the prominent proponents of 'the architecture as art' such as Kroha had to face the rationalist architects as Jiří Voženílek who tended to prefer the economy over anything else.⁴⁹

In 1953, besides the conference, a competition for the Central House of Army took place. The building was supposed to become a high-rise tower block similar to those which the delegation of Czechoslovak architects had a chance to see in Moscow during their visit in the USSR in 1952. The winning project by the team of architects Pavel Bareš—Jiří Kadeřábek—Jaroslav Kándl—Karel Prager got indeed very close to the Soviet models. Although their project got never built, the competition offers a good parallel to the competition for the *Langelinie* pavilion in Copenhagen when the winning project by Eva and Nils Koppel—or the jury who has chosen their project—set the style of the next couple

⁴⁹ Pavel Halík, *Architektura padesátých let*, in: Švácha and Platovská 2005 (note 16), 314-320.

of years. While in Copenhagen this new ‘establishment style’ culminated in Arne Jacobsen’s SAS Royal Hotel, the style of the socialist establishment culminated around the same time also in a building of a hotel, the Hotel International (1952-1957), designed by František Kadeřábek and his team. Similarly as Jacobsen’s masterwork, also this hotel was supposed to become a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, although not thoroughly designed by one architect-designer, but instead in collaborations with tens of artists including the doyen of Czech early modern art Max Švabinský (1873-1962). Yet, the period of the heavy pressure on the architects to subordinate to the style of Socialist realism was relatively short and it only lasted from 1950 to 1955, although there were buildings designed in this spirit well until the end of the 1950s. The 1954 Nikita Khrushchev’s *Industrialised Building Speech* condemning the superfluous decoration in architecture paved the way to the typisation and industrialisation which became the new bearers of the ideological meaning and at the same time enabled rehabilitation of the modern architecture. The singular turning point, which gave courage to many others, was the Czechoslovak pavilion for the Expo 1958 in Brussels designed by the architects’ team František Cubr—Josef Hrubý—Zdeněk Pokorný.⁵⁰

Where would we look for a third generation architect in this situation? Surely, outside the main turmoil. The grey zone could be found especially in the architecture inspired by Auguste Perret (1874-1954), which united Classicism and modernism based on the concrete constructions. Examples of such architecture were the high-rise houses in Kladno-Rozdělův by Josef Havlíček—Karel Filsak—Karel Bubeníček or the structures for agriculture by Vladimír Beneš. The structures for agriculture and industry in general became a haven protected from the dogmatism of the Socialist realism by a certain kind of engineer objectivity.⁵¹ At the same time, the Perret-like architecture allowed the architects to stay connected to the interwar functional tradition. As Rostislav Švácha explained, this architecture ‘*could not develop in the sunshine of approval from the architecture magazines of the time, and also had to stick to more traditional or mainly Neoclassical architectural forms. It mostly existed hidden and out of the mainstream.*’ Next to architects like Antonín Tenzer, Jaroslav Frágner, Josef Hrubý and others who managed to keep a certain degree of integrity, for Rostislav Švácha, the ‘*architect who achieved the freest position and was able to build buildings which would stand up to the strictest criteria applied to Czech 20th century architecture was Zdeněk Plesník from Zlín.*’⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibidem 311 and 326-327.

⁵¹ Ibidem 323-325.

⁵² Rostislav Švácha, Zdeněk Plesník’s Work in Context, in: Zdeněk Plesník and Radomír Kališ, 3 vily architekta Zdeňka Plesníka / 3 villas by architect Zdeněk Plesník, Praha-Brno-Zlín 2001, 161.

It is of course not without difficulty to compare Zdeněk Plesník with Jørn Utzon. There are probably other candidates for such comparison who could be considered as belonging to the third generation, such as Karel Prager (1923-2001) or Karel Hubáček (1924-2011). But these architects were few years younger than Utzon and thus their first *chef d'oeuvres* belong to a different and much freer atmosphere of the 1960s. As a result, my choice fell on Zdeněk Plesník (1914-2003). Plesník's interest in architecture was triggered, symptomatically, by an encounter with the architecture of Le Corbusier. Although it was probably just through a reproduction in a magazine, the work of the Parisian architect literary arrested him.⁵³ In 1936 Plesník briefly worked for the first-class avant-garde architect Jaromír Krejcar (1895-1949) on the competition design for the Czechoslovak pavilion at the International Exhibition of Arts and Technology in Paris. He knew Krejcar from before, and what is interesting, through Karel Teige. Yet, what were Plesník's ties to Teige remains in obscurity. In years 1937-1939 he practiced in the design studio of the Zlín shoe company *Baťa*, which also sent him to Paris in 1937. This was a chance not only to see the International Exhibition itself, but also to see the contemporary Parisian architecture, including the works by Auguste Perret who would become an important source of inspiration for his own work around 1950.⁵⁴ In 1939 Plesník also began to study architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague under Josef Gočár, but already after few days he got, together with other Czech students, arrested by the Nazis and kept in Oranienburg. Between 1941-1945 he worked again in Zlín and after the war he finished his studies at the Academy under Jaroslav Frágner.⁵⁵ The influence of Frágner's synthesis of Functionalism and Classicism left also its mark on Plesník's first postwar project, the observatory in his home town Valašské Meziříčí (1947-1955). The observatory was build on a church-like layout with three 'naves' and a 'transept' placed in the front. The central nave is occupied by a lecture hall, while the side naves house the offices. The transept serves as a foyer, whose front wall made fully in glass allows views outside. Through the middle of the foyer grows a massive circular column bearing a circular platform with the actual observatory. The domed observatory is thus elevated above the foyer as a large mushroom growing through the building from its own foundations

⁵³ Zdeněk Plesník, Zlínu chybí solidnost architektů, online source: http://kultura.idnes.cz/plesnik-zlinu-chybi-solidnost-architektu-fg9-/show_aktual.aspx?c=A010319_173324_zlin_volnycas_boh, published 19. 3. 2001, retrieved 2. 3. 2014.

⁵⁴ Kateřina Pažoutová—Rostislav Švácha, Rozhovor se Zdeňkem Plesníkem, in: Ludvík Ševeček, ed., Miroslav Lorenc, Jaromír Krejcar: zlínská moderní architektura a pražská avantgarda, Zlín 1995, 55.

⁵⁵ Plesník 2001 (note 53).

independent from the rest of the building. The circular desk of the observatory hall is connected to the foyer below only with the glass of a ribbon window. The whole building is thus a merger of Functionalism and Classicism, but also of the human and natural order. In its appearance, the with its dome and a simplified portico (in fact, the columns were set in front of the facade so that it could be made of glass), it also reminds of the 18th century 'revolutionary architecture' of Étienne-Louis Boullée and Claude Nicolas Ledoux. And if the observatory was a place of the 'communication with heaven,' in modern—and more so in socialist—times the science was about to take place of the religion. Hence, to use the form of a temple was to work with an archetype shared by the collective consciousness.

In 1948 Zdeněk Plesník began to work at *Centroprojekt Zlín*, the architecture studio of the nationalised company *Baťa*. Zlín was a unique town inextricably bound to the *Baťa* shoe manufacturing company flourishing especially in the 1920s and 1930s. At *Baťa* rationalisation was applied not only to the shoe manufacturing, but also to the construction of buildings from factories to dormitories, schools, stores and social centres all the way to the monument of the factory founder, Tomáš Baťa. All built on a modular grid of 6.15 by 6.15 meters. Also the movement of people, materials and products was governed by the principle of minimal energy consumption. The city of Zlín was a capitalist dystopia enacted, and at the same time the nest of the future socialist—or state capitalist—building rationalisation. In style, the architecture was inspired by the American industrial buildings and to a certain extent also by the architecture of Auguste Perret, who was himself interested in Zlín and spent a day there during his visit to Czechoslovakia in 1947.⁵⁶ For Plesník, the architecture of Zlín could have served as a source of unselfconscious architecture—an important source of inspiration for the third generation architects. In this case the unselfconscious architecture was industrial rather than vernacular, or even the 'industrial vernacular,' as Rostislav Švácha has termed the concrete and brick architecture of Zlín.⁵⁷ That the focus on the industrial architecture could be also seen as a kind of primitivism was recently reminded by e.g. Hal Foster on the example of Le Corbusier.⁵⁸ We must not forget that although the vernacular inspiration was of great importance in the Czech debates on architecture during the occupation, after 1948 it got a wholly new dimension through its deployment by the Socialist realist works of the likes of Jiří Kroha. The rationality of the industrial buildings hence provided a protection against the 'irrational' times of the Stalinisation and, as I have already mentioned, for many architects

⁵⁶ Oldřich Starý, *Auguste Perret v Praze*, *Architektura ČSR VII*, 1948, 35-36.

⁵⁷ Švácha 2001 (note 52), 165.

⁵⁸ Hal Foster, *The Art-architecture Complex*, London and New York, 2011, 104.

the industrial buildings became a territory free of the ideological pressure. Plesník himself has expressed his 'fascination' with the city's characteristic architecture given by brick, concrete and steel. And although at the beginning he was thinking of how to escape the grid, he gradually accepted it as an expression of order.⁵⁹

In years 1950-1954, Plesník built the MEZ factory complex in Hulín, nearby Zlín. For Plesník, it was the first project where he had to design according to the *Baťa* grid. But more importantly, Plesník showed a strong social commitment when designing the factory. As he explained, he was following the work of the workers in the old factory to find out about spots leading to injury to avoid those places in his own project in order to protect the workers and make their work easier.⁶⁰ The project for the factory in Hulín was interesting from one more perspective. Plesník collaborated on the project with a static expert and specialist on concrete shell vaults Konrád Hruban. Hruban was active in Brno and Zlín throughout 1940s and 1950s and according to Rostislav Švácha, he was a 'technician with an artistic vision' who challenged the architects to more and more daring concepts of the space. In his courageous approach to shaping of the concrete shell vaults, Hruban was going in the direction of his Western colleagues as Edouard Torroja or Felix Candela. This is, of course, a rather unexpected connection if we think of the shell vaults of the Sydney Opera House on which Utzon collaborated with the structural engineer Ove Arup. The result which lead to a combination of the rational grid of the columns contrasting with equally rational, yet also poetic curves of the roof shells, give a hint for a speculation. The examples of the rational 'base' and poetic 'superstructure' were not uncommon in the European architecture of the time, with Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation* as a prime example. Yet, we can also think of another inspiration, namely that of the traditional Chinese architecture with rational column skeleton and elegant curves of the roof.

While Utzon got a chance to experience the non-Western architecture during his travels right after 1948, the travel possibilities in Czechoslovakia were at the same time becoming more and more scarce. In a stark contrast to the general situation in the country stood two travellers from Zlín. Miroslav Zikmund and Jiří Hanzelka travelled through Africa and Latin America in years 1947-1950, bringing to Czechoslovakia pictures and film documentaries. When the two travellers wanted to get their houses built in 1953, they asked no one else than Zdeněk Plesník. What attracted these two man to commission Plesník as the architect of their houses? Did they share an interest in non-Western cultures? In fact, we know nothing of such ties. Yet, it seems that Plesník got also an

⁵⁹ Plesník 2001 (note 53).

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

opportunity to see the non-Western architecture with his own eyes as early as 1949. That year, he was sent, as a member of the Czechoslovak delegation, to China—a newly ‘befriended’ country of the socialist block. China, a mainly agricultural country at the time, was in a great need of technically skilled professionals, and Plesník himself was about to build two buildings in China later on in 1954.⁶¹ Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about Plesník’s first travel to China. In the houses for the traveller duo of Miroslav Zikmund (1953) and Jiří Hanzelka (1953-1955), which were followed by one more villa for a composer Zdeněk Liška (1956-59), Plesník had a chance to develop a concept of ‘monumental flowing spaces’, not unlike those of the houses by Utzon. This was made possible because the houses were designed as exceptional private commissions, and thus they were safe from any ideological criticism. An important aspect that brings them close to Utzon is the fact that these unique houses were entirely assembled from prefabricated components. An interesting link between these houses and China was made by Rostislav Švácha. In his view, *‘the closest thing to Plesník’s villas in 1950s Czech architecture is the Czechoslovak Embassy in Peking from 1957-60 by the Prague team of Filsak, Bubeníček, Louda and Šrámek: a work by architects who maintained the same distance from the sorela [Socialist realism] as their Zlín colleague.’*⁶² The competition for the Czechoslovak embassy in Peking took place in 1955-1956. Most architects were struggling to merge modernist or Socialist realist architecture with some Chinese inspiration—which most of them knew only from the pictures and literature. The winning project by Karel Filsak and his team bore almost none literal references to China, yet their pavilions and wings arranged around a courtyard garden were very close to the organisation of a traditional Chinese dwelling.⁶³

Was China for Czechoslovak architects in the 1950s a relatively safe haven from the Soviet Socialist realism? Rostislav Švácha certainly thought so: *‘Inspiration from Chinese people’s art gave Czech artists and architects a chance to escape the clutches of the strictest Socialist Realism.’* The ties with China, although primarily political and economic, included an important cultural dimension too. In 1955, a delegation of Czech artists, including Zdeněk Sklenář, Adolf Hoffmeister and the architect Václav Hlinský, travelled to China. Hlinský (1909-2001) wrote about his experiences from China in *Architektura ČSR*. During their two month’s stay, they visited Peking and southern China. Of Hlinský’s account, only the last part was dedicated to the new socialist architecture. He described the

⁶¹ Ladislava Hornáková, Zdeněk Plesník - architektonické dílo, Zlín 1998, 2.

⁶² Švácha 2001 (note 52), 166 and 171.

⁶³ Karel Stráník, Soutěž na velvyslanectví ČSR v Pekinu, in: *Architektura ČSR*, 1957, 120-125.

transition from the traditional to industrial building along with the launching of the national style in architecture in 1953. Similarly than in Czechoslovakia, wrote Hilský, also in China the fight against cosmopolitanism led to some erroneous tendencies in imitating the past forms. In 1955 Chinese architecture went through criticism of formalism, which led to a concept of new Chinese architecture coming from the roots of the great tradition but in accordance with modern building technologies. The description of the new architecture could have been taken from Giedion, and yet its results were what he called the pseudo-relations to the past. The past was crucial for Hilský in China. The buildings were built on elevated platforms and their construction consisted of circular columns set on a modular principle with fixed proportions. The characteristic difference to Western architecture were the curves of the roof. Another important aspect that Hilský appreciated was the harmony between the buildings and the landscape, material and climate.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, we know very little of the impressions China left on Plesník, except that he was amazed by the diligence of the Chinese and brought hundreds of diapositives from his travels.⁶⁵ Hence, we can only assume that his impressions were similar to those of Václav Hilský.

As mentioned earlier, Plesník designed two buildings for China in 1954: a building for a photogravure press (1954) and a broadcasting transmitter building (1954-1956), both in Beijing. For Rostislav Švácha, both buildings show sensitivity to the local traditions, and while he called the former *‘one of the cleanest examples of the Perret style in Czech architecture of the 1950s,’* the broadcasting transmitter is a more complicated case. Although the inspiration by Perret is also present, Švácha also observed references to Frank Lloyd Wright’s prairie style period.⁶⁶ Yet, what dominates, without any doubt, is the shape of a Chinese pagoda, or rather a Chinese pavilion with a massive base topped with a more subtle structure. Plesník, however, strongly rejected a conscious aiming at the shape of a pagoda when designing the transmitter: *‘I would have never done that. First, it had to be clear, what the activity in the building needs. The (actual) architecture came in the last place, even though it sounds odd. The building has the appearance of the gradual steps because the technology required it, and I used the Chinese elements only in the details.’*⁶⁷ We know that he wanted to build a monument, because the building was on a hill and could be seen from afar. At the same time, this prominent position in the city landscape also made him to build something that would add to the place rather than disrupt it.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Václav Hilský, O čínské architektuře, in: Architektura ČSR, 1956, 496-505.

⁶⁵ A telephone interview with Mrs. Potěšilová, the daughter of Zdeněk Plesník, March 2014.

⁶⁶ Švácha 2001 (note 52), 166.

⁶⁷ Plesník 2001 (note 53).

⁶⁸ A telephone interview with Mrs. Potěšilová, the daughter of Zdeněk Plesník, March 2014.

My criteria for choosing Zdeněk Plesník as an adept for the third generation architect are those defined by Giedion such as a stronger relation to the past, further strengthening of the sculptural tendencies, and the right of expression above pure function. Yet, right the first of these criteria, the relation to the past, is more troubled with Plesník. Due to the times in Eastern Europe, his work could have only partly escaped the ruling dogma of the Socialist realism, which has most clearly printed its mark on his 1956 office building for the City Transport Headquarters in Zlín. Despite a lot of space dedicated to the influence of China, I do not consider this link between Utzon and Plesník as the constitutive one for the comparison of the two architects. Still, it was also interesting to show, how the reception of China could transform on a formal or conceptional level in different environments. What bounds Utzon and Plesník for me is, rather, the relation to the unselfconscious architecture and prefabrication, which they—in different conditions—developed to different results. The architects of the third generation did not reject Functionalism and rationalisation of the building process as such, on the contrary, they embraced them, but as a tool instead of ends. This is an important point with the work of Plesník—when the Socialist realism was at its peak, he managed to continue the interwar tradition based on rationality, while at times when the focus on rationality was becoming an end in itself, Plesník could resist this trend. The rational thinking enriched by the attention towards the emotional life, the natural and historical context and continuity of modern architecture, make Plesník a good candidate for the third generation modernist.

* * *

It is a sad irony that neither Utzon nor Plesník, despite their excellent designs, got a chance to build a truly public building during the 1950s in their home countries. But while Utzon's world wide fame has been secured through the Sydney Opera House, Plesník doesn't even have a monograph until today and he is overshadowed by the more progressive architects of the 1960s and the architects of the Czechoslovak pavilion for the Expo 1958 in Brussels. Yet, I believe that the comparison of the work of Utzon and Plesník is not only possible, but also fruitful. This comparison, however, cannot be based on formal similarities, rather, it has to be based on their attitudes. Both Utzon and Plesník stood in contrast to the mainstream architectural production in their home countries in the 1950s, or, we can also say that their architecture did not fit easily the the polarised understanding of the Western International Style and the Eastern Socialist historicism. Instead, with a pronounced social commitment, they tried to synthesise the essence of both: the rationality of modernism on the one hand and the requirement of the appeal to the shared consciousness on the other.

Chapter 3: Beyond Surrealism, Towards Abstraction

When the Danish art historian Sigurd Schulz (1984-1980) wrote a newspaper article *Surrealism and the Future* about the painters Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen and Erik Olson in 1943, he was almost accurate when he predicted no future for Surrealism itself, but saw its development potential.⁶⁹ In 1944, most Surrealists, such as Wilhelm Freddie, Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, his wife Elsa Thoresen and Harry Carlsson fled from Denmark to Sweden. Carlsson dropped painting as such around 1949 to become a 'forgotten surrealist'.⁷⁰ Thoresen stayed in Sweden with Bjerke-Petersen until their divorce in 1953, when she left for the U.S.A. Rita Kernn-Larsen, another Danish female Surrealist, had left Denmark already earlier and survived the blitz in London. In 1947, she settled down in southern France and at the same time abandoned Surrealism. Hence, from all the Danish Surrealists, only Wilhelm Freddie returned to Denmark in 1950. Yet, the Danish art scene was thriving during the war thanks to the younger generation of artists who tried to synthesise Surrealism with Abstraction derived from the interwar magazine *Linien* founded by Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen in 1934, before he turned to Surrealism exclusively.⁷¹

In 1946, the younger artists grouped in the *Høst* association approached the Museum of Modern Art in New York with a brochure *Some Information Concerning the Basis of the New Creative Art in Denmark*, but nothing came out of this attempt.⁷² Yet, the artist grouped in *Høst* were not to be forgotten, since it was these artists, including Asger Jorn, who were to become the Danish members of *Cobra*. In their effort to bring together Surrealism with the Bauhaus-like Abstraction, they created a 'spontaneous' abstract-symbolic expression, to which they owed their label as *spontaneists*. Meanwhile, Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen (1909-1957) made contact with Herbert Read and Oscar Dominguez, through whom he learned that many Surrealists spent the war in the U.S.A. The fact that Bjerke-Petersen celebrated a commercial success in Sweden allowed him to travel to New York in 1946. There he got invited by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp to participate in the International Surrealist Exhibition *Le surréalisme en 1947* in Paris. Simultaneously, however, he started to abandon Surrealism in order to return to his abstract roots. When

⁶⁹ Sigurd Schulz, *Surrealismen og Fremtiden*, Nationaltidende, 6. 7. 1943, 8.

⁷⁰ S. Saabye, Harry Carlsson - Den glemte surrealist, Espergærde 1982.

⁷¹ Jens Jørgen Thorsen, *Modernisme i dansk malerkunst*, København 1987, 26-27.

⁷² The text was formulated by Asger Jorn in conjunction with Egill Jacobsen and signed by E. Alfelt, E. Bille, K. Blask, H. Heerup, E. Jacobsen, R. Jacobsen, J. Jensen, A. Jorn, T. Møllerup, R. Mortensen, E. Ortved, C.-H. Pederse, V. Rohde and Erik Thommesen. The text is reprinted in: Per Hovdenakk, Egill Jacobsen, Vol. 2: *Malerier 1965-80 / Paintings 1965-80*, København 1985, 51-72.

evaluating the New York art scene, it was the large number of paintings by Wassily Kandinsky in the Museum of Non-Objective Art—unrivalled by any European museum—that mattered to Bjerke-Petersen most.⁷³ In 1947, he exhibited in the museum himself in connection with the scholarship from the Guggenheim Foundation, which helped him to overcome the financial difficulties in the U.S.A. On his way back to Sweden, Bjerke-Petersen made a short visit in Denmark and met Ib Geertsen. Through Geertsen he got invited to the *Linien II* exhibition in *Tokanten*, which I will discuss later.⁷⁴ Another Dane invited to the International Surrealist Exhibition was Wilhelm Freddie (1909 -1995). On this occasion, Freddie traveled to Paris and met for the first time Breton in person, as well as Victor Brauner, who had a clear influence on Freddie's painting after 1947.⁷⁵ The works of Brauner belonged to the best examples of the attraction to the occult, which became the main accent of the postwar Surrealism after Breton's return from America in 1946.⁷⁶

Among those travelling to Paris on the occasion of the International Surrealist Exhibition *Le surréalisme en 1947* was also Asger Jorn. He also visited Breton, but his visit was more than anything else a farewell to Surrealism. While Breton found Jorn *Swedenborgian*, Jorn thought of Breton as a 'reactionary'. In 1947, Jorn was also in vivid contact with Claude Serbanne, who collaborated on a book of Jorn's drawings. Already ten years before the *Fin de Copenhague*, which came out of collaboration with Guy Debord in 1957, Jorn maintained that a new friendship should be celebrated by a book. A selection of circa fifty drawings from 1937 to 1947 was accompanied by poems by Jens August Schade and Édouard Jaguer (1924-2006), who later also wrote the afterword explaining the history of the book.⁷⁷ Jaguer met Jorn through Jean-Michel Atlan in Paris in 1946, but he had already known Jorn's name through an article about the achievements of the Abstract-Surrealist artists in Denmark written by the duo René Renne—Claude Serbanne in the magazine *Les Cahiers du Sud*. According to Jaguer, 'If one in those [early postwar] years wanted to get a picture of what was going on in the world from Stockholm to Mexico, from [Jean-Michel] Atlan's to [Gordon] Onslow Ford's studio, one had to rely on Renne-Serbanne in 'Les Cahiers', one could say that the light was coming from Nice and Marseille, not from Paris.' A special number of *Cahiers* from autumn 1946, which

⁷³ Dansk Abstrakt-Maler der vil erobre Amerika, Ekstrabladet, 16. 9. 1947, 2.

⁷⁴ Troels Andersen: Biography, in: Karen Friis Hansen, Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, Silkeborg 2006, 135.

⁷⁵ Édouard Jaguer, Wilhelm Freddie, København 1969, 153.

⁷⁶ Jean-Clarence Lambert, Cobra, Humlebæk 1983, 18-19.

⁷⁷ Édouard Jaguer, Efterskrift, in: René Renne and Claude Serbanne, Tegninger af Asger Jorn, Silkeborg 1979, 94-95.

collected the Surrealist poetry across the world including the Danish, became probably also a basis for the anthology *Tvivlens Plageaand*.⁷⁸ This collection of Surrealist poetry and prose selected by Claude Serbanne came from the initiative of Steen Colding, a passionate Danish promoter of Surrealism. Wilhelm Freddie, who designed the cover, was by means of a reproduction also represented inside the book together with the Romanian Surrealists living in Paris—Victor Brauner, Jacques Hérold and Gherasim Luca—as well as with the Surrealists of the Czech *Group Ra*—Josef Istler, Vilém Reichmann and Václav Tikal. Except Freddie, no other Danish artists—as Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen or Asger Jorn—were included, which is not surprising regarding the fact that both of them were in 1947 significantly diverging away from Surrealism.⁷⁹ But it would not be absolutely correct to claim, that after 1947 Freddie was the only Danish Surrealist. At the exhibition *Surrealistisk manifestation* organised by Freddie in 1949 in Stockholm, Freddie was joined not only by names as Ernst, Tanguy, Arp, Brauner or Hérold, but also by younger Danish artists Albert Mertz—a member of *Linien II*—and Sven Dalsgaard—a member of *Spiralen*—who both combined the inspirations from Surrealism and Dada.⁸⁰

As mentioned, Jorn was by 1947 on a track almost independent from Surrealism. During his visit in Paris in 1946, he met not only Édouard Jaguer, but also Constant Nieuwenhuys and later Christian Dotremont, with whom he would stay in touch since. Among the Danish *spontaneists* of the *Høst* group, it was Jorn who was most keen on sharing the achievements of the Danish art internationally. His dreams of an international collaboration gradually developed into *Cobra* (1948-1951), and although the enterprise lasted just for three years, its impact cannot be overestimated. *Cobra* itself was founded on the debris of *Le surréalisme-révolutionnaire*, a no less interesting, but very short-lived movement established as a reaction to the the ‘*Rupture inaugurale*’ published by Breton’s group as an official end of any collaboration with the Communist Party in July 1947. In October-November 1947, *Le surréalisme-révolutionnaire* held a conference in Brussels. In early 1948 it was followed by a bulletin and the exhibition *Prises de Terre* held in February at Galerie Breteau. On Jorn’s invitation, Richard Mortensen and Robert Jacobsen—two Danish artists who shortly afterwards turned to Concrete art—also participated in the exhibition. The second conference held in Paris in September of the same year marked the final end of *Le surréalisme-révolutionnaire* and the foundation of *Cobra*.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibidem, 92.

⁷⁹ Claude Serbanne, ed., *Tvivlens Plageaand – Surrealistisk anthologi*, Aarhus 1947.

⁸⁰ Jaguer 1969 (note 75), 153.

⁸¹ Lambert 1983 (note 76), 19-20; and Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 96.

Cobra was unique in many regards, one of which was its decentralisation manifested among other things through the nomadic editorship of the *Cobra* magazine, whose eight issues were published between 1949 and 1951. Yet, my focus here is the Danish art, and thus I will try to follow the Danish artists, without any claims for placing Copenhagen as *Cobra*'s capital. At the time of founding *Cobra*, Jorn was still a member of *Høst* and his signature under the founding document of *Cobra*, *La Cause Était Entendue*, was also representing his comrades from *Høst*. In December 1948, the Dutch painters Appel, Constant, Corneille and Christian Dotremont visited Denmark to take part in the *Høst*-exhibition together with Asger Jorn, Ejler Bille, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Else Alfelt, Erik Ortvad, Erik Thommesen, as well as Sonja Ferlov with her husband Ernest Mancoba and Knud Nielsen, who in 1947 and again in 1950s exhibited also together with *Linien II*.⁸² Yet, *Høst*, as *Linien* ten years before, was nearing to its end. In November 1949, the Dutch painters as well as the Scots William Gear and Stephen Gilbert took part again as guests in the *Høst* exhibition, but Jorn was getting closer to another cooperative—*Spiralen*—whose members proved to be helpful when organising the conference at Bregnerød. In 1950 Jorn, as well as e.g. the former editor of *Helhesten* Robert Dahlmann Olsen, became a member of *Spiralen* (until 1953, when he left Denmark), which meant a natural end of *Høst*. The following year, Carl-Henning Pedersen held his own retrospective at the premises of *Den Frie*, previously used by *Høst*.⁸³

Spiralen, which was founded in 1947, became until its dissolution in 1958 an open-minded meeting place of the *spontaneists* (some of whom kept their abstract-surrealist *spontaneist* expression achieved in 1940s well until the 1980s), Surrealists, as well as the Concrete artists. In 1953, *Spiralen* welcomed Wilhelm Freddie, and Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen exhibited with *Spiralen* in 1956, a year before his death. The next year, at the last *Spiralen* exhibition 1957-1958, Bjerke-Petersen was commemorated by a collection of his paintings and an obituary by Freddie, who emphasised their more than twenty years long friendship.⁸⁴ This was an evidence of loyalty and friendship elevated above the fights over the formal questions of art. Freddie returned to Denmark in 1950 and in 1951 he exhibited in Denmark for the first time since ten years. Due to the controversies at the *Artists' Autumn Exhibition*, Freddie exhibited with the *May Exhibition* and *Spiralen* since 1953, and internationally with the post-surrealist group *Phases* founded by Édouard Jaguer. *Phases* was one of the offsprings of *Cobra* and its eponymous revue contained works by

⁸² Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 85 and 100-105.

⁸³ Ibidem, 90 and 109.

⁸⁴ Wilhelm Freddie, Wilhelm Bjerke-Petersen in memoriam, in: *Spiralen*, København 1957-1958.

e.g. Asger Jorn or Carl-Henning Pedersen.⁸⁵ During his stay in Paris in 1957, Freddie met for the first time the surrealist painters Roberto Matta and Wilfredo Lam, and around that time his painting changed towards gestic abstraction. This was another stage on his way of exploring the possibilities of painting, since he around 1948 abandoned the veristic Surrealism.⁸⁶

The year 1947 was an eventful one for the Danish art scene. While *Høst* was still at its peak, there was forming an opposition towards it at the same time. In September 1947, a group of young artists—Viggo and Inga Lyngbye, Hans Nielsen, Niels Macholm, Richard Winther, Albert Mertz, Kirsten Stenbæk, ‘Bamse’ Kragh-Jacobsen, Knud Nielsen and Ib Geertsen among others—staged the exhibition *Linien II*, which by its name declared its sympathies for the interwar magazine and association *Linien*. This was confirmed by inviting the *Linien*’s founder Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen as well as another artist associated with it—Richard Mortensen. I have already showed that there was no rivalry between Freddie and Bjerke-Petersen, so it is less surprising that while Bjerke-Petersen was invited as a guest, many of the members of *Linien II* were also under a spell of Surrealism and Dada with admiration for Freddie’s provocative objects.⁸⁷ The surrealist inclinations were noticeable especially in Mertz’s and Wither’s collages and photograms from around 1947.

At *Linien II*’s first exhibition, it were not even the paintings by Bjerke-Petersen that would have foreshadowed the future orientation towards the Concrete art, which was about to take over the next exhibition in summer 1948. The inspiration for the shift came from Paris, where many Danish artists travelled as soon as the postwar situation allowed it. When Richard Mortensen (1910-1993) and Robert Jacobsen (1912-1993) left for Paris in 1947, they were still *spontaneists*, but their works started to change during 1948 profoundly.⁸⁸ In spring 1948, Mortensen created a series of experimental ink drawings that marked the end of his *spontaneist* period, which used to align him with the *Høst* members. During his summer stay in Denmark, the ink drawings were further developed to canvases which were exhibited at the second *Linien II* exhibition in July-August and marked Mortensen’s turn to geometric Abstraction.⁸⁹ The *spontaneist* Ejler Bille (1910-2004), with whom Mortensen exchanged letters at the time, had only little understanding for Mortensen’s new direction. Bille tried to open a discussion with Mortensen by inviting him

⁸⁵ Lambert 1983 (note 76), 201-204.

⁸⁶ Jaguer 1969 (note 75), 26-35 and 153-157.

⁸⁷ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 134.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 136, 139-140.

⁸⁹ Jan Würtz Frandsen, Richard Mortensen og *Linien II* 1947-1950, in: Charlotte Sabroe, ed., *Linien II* 47-50, København 1988, 32.

in November to a debate at the *Høst* exhibition, which was one of the first *Cobra* collaborations. In his talk, Bille accused *Linien II* of formalism and dehumanisation, while Mortensen refused Bille's reservations and defended *Linien*'s attempts to work towards an 'objective language'.⁹⁰ Bille made his position towards *Linien II* clear already in summer, when *Linien II* changed its name on the occasion of the new exhibition to simple *Linien*, fully adopting the name of the interwar avant-garde group. In the catalogue, Geertsen, Winther, Mertz, and Kragh-Jacobsen published a text in which they explained the change in name as a declaration of continuation of the revolutionary ideas of *Linien*. The artists of the original *Linien*, who preserved their revolutionary attitude, were invited to the exhibition, read the text. These were Bjerke-Petersen and Mortensen, while Bille, the third co-editor of the magazine *Linien*, was not invited. The young artists explained this indirectly in a later text, when they described the aftermath of *Linien*—the activities in *Høst*—as a '*near death of the Danish abstract art by revelling in sentimental impressionism groping around in its incalculable wild spontaneity*'. The second *Linien* exhibition in 1948 thus tried to undo these mistakes and continue in what they perceived as the essence of the original *Linien*. Bille could not but protest against these statements. He accused the young artists of appropriating the name which did not belong to them and benefiting from it. Even after ten years, as the author of Danish entries in the *Gyldendals Leksikon over Moderne Nordisk Kunst*, Bille omitted not only the members of *Linien II*, but also Bjerke-Petersen and Freddie.⁹¹ The conflict was deep and illustrative of the whole situation in 1948: the claim for being the right formal expression of mainly the same ideas —'*an immediate, pure visual experience, a vision of things and the world prior to knowledge and interpretation*,' as Jan Würtz Frandsen described it.⁹² The first shots were fired and both groups continued to define themselves against each other. In an interview from September 1948, Asger Jorn stated that he was invited to take part in the *Linien* exhibition in summer, but the invitation was later withdrawn, because he was not abstract enough. Yet, he saw the conflict somewhere else: while he and his comrades from *Høst* were trying to be 'modern on the Danish basis', the members of *Linien II* were 'cosmopolitan' as a result of their inferiority complex towards the French art.⁹³

⁹⁰ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 88-89.

⁹¹ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 87-88 and 142; and Jesper Engelstoft, Leif Østby, Åke Meyerson, eds., *Gyldendals Leksikon over Moderne Nordisk Kunst*, København 1958.

⁹² Würtz Frandsen 1988 (note 89), 30.

⁹³ Otto Gelsted, *Atombomben er også et kunstværk* [interview with Asger Jorn], *Land og Folk*, 5. 9. 1948, 8.

As suggested, the 1948 *Linien* exhibition was dominated by the Concrete art. Next to the *Linien II* members such as Ib Geertsen, Henrik Buch, Helge Jacobsen, Richard Winther, Albert Mertz or 'Bamse' Kragh Jacobsen exhibited not only Bjerke-Petersen with Elsa Thorsen and Sonja Ferlov, but also the French guests Jean Dewasne, Jean Deyrolle, Serge Poliakoff and Victor Vasarely. The French guests exhibited among others in Copenhagen already in April 1948 at the exhibition *Gallery Denise René* in *Tokanten*, which was of a great influence for the *Linien II* artists. At the same time, many young Danish artists, as Gunnar Aagaard Andersen or Paul Gadegaard, were during spring 1948 themselves in Paris, where they could follow the immediate discussions on Concrete art.⁹⁴ *Linien's* exhibition in 1949 continued in similar spirit, and the circle of international guests was enlarging by names as Magnelli, Gilioli, Hartung, Schneider, Deyrolle, Dewasne, Domela, but also Arp, Le Corbusier and Kandinsky. Robert Jacobsen showed his first iron sculptures and Richard Mortensen and Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen were guests of honour. The exhibition of 1949 was, however, marked by a new break. According to Jens Jørgen Thorsen, this break was caused by the different understanding of art. While Mortensen and Jacobsen, as well as their French colleagues from the *Gallery Denise René*, preferred art in its traditional understanding as creation of autonomous objects, the younger artists of *Linien II* were much more than that interested in the opening of art into the social space, an idea which was closer to Bauhaus than to the French Abstract art. Throughout 1950 the differences grew larger, and as a result, none of the French artist, neither Mortensen nor Jacobsen, took part in the 1951 and 1952 exhibitions. In 1951, they were substituted by thirty-five American Concrete painters with Josef Albers among them. For some of the artists of *Linien II*, totally new vistas were opening. Yet, a feeling of resentment at not being included in *Klar form*—a large exhibition of Concrete art touring Scandinavia—contributed to the demoralisation of *Linien II* which fell apart after the exhibition in 1952, and thus survived *Cobra* by one year only. A revival came in 1956 at the exhibition *LINIEN II Konkret Realisme* inspired by a previous exhibition of Mortensen, Jacobsen and the Swede Olle Baertling in Stockholm. They were invited to Copenhagen to exhibit with the former *Linien II* members, which again attracted a new generation of artists such as Ole Schwalbe, Jørn Larsen or Mogens Lohmann. What might have seem as a rebirth, however, died two years later in the very last *Linien* exhibition *LINIEN igen* in 1958.⁹⁵

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⁹⁴ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 140-141.

⁹⁵ Ibidem, 145-151.

During the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia—divided into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the independent Slovak State—Surrealism came under a strong pressure and all the activities were happening exclusively underground. This assured Surrealism both an irresistible attraction for the younger generation and a recognition by the early postwar establishment. The first postwar exhibition of Toyen (1902-1980), a Czech Surrealist painter, was opened by the president Edvard Beneš in 1945. All in all, however, the situation of the former *Group of Surrealists in Czechoslovakia* was poor. The Group was struck by the internal conflicts over the relation to the Communist Party already in 1938; still, the Group continued its activities and just before the WWII the young poet Jindřich Heisler (1914-1953) joined the Group. Yet, after the war the actual Surrealist group could not count more than Toyen, Heisler, and the theoretician Karel Teige (1900-1951). Soon, however, Teige would be left alone from his generation, only to gather around himself members of a younger generation of Czech artists close to Surrealism.⁹⁶

This was because Toyen and Heisler left for Paris in March 1947—with no intention to return—to prepare Toyen's exhibition at the *Gallery Denise René*. The introduction to the catalogue was written by André Breton, since the two had immediately joined Breton's group. Heisler involved himself in preparations for the exhibition *Le surréalisme en 1947*, which opened at *Galerie Maeght* in June 1947. Both Toyen and Heisler were invited to prepare one of the Altars to the New Myth for the exhibition.⁹⁷ During the preparation for the exhibition, Heisler befriended its architect Frederick Kiesler. Heisler and Kiesler exchanged letters, some of which give us a good insight into the situation of Surrealism. Heisler was very keen on launching the first postwar Surrealist magazine, *Néon*. For Heisler, *Néon* was supposed to mark a beginning of a new Surrealist era free from polemics and feuds. In November 1947 he wrote to Kiesler that Breton had agreed with the non-polemical and poetic character of the journal and Heisler listed the names of his future collaborators: Sarane Alexandrian, Vera and Jacques Hérold, Alain Jouffroy, Stanislas Rodanski, and Claud Tarnaud. The first issue was published in January 1948. Due to delays, Heisler only got Kiesler for the collaboration on the second number. Kiesler drew an organic banner that continued across all the pages of the journal similarly to his 'endless architecture'. The banner was then filled in with contributions by a variety of artists. Despite several attempts to gain a contribution by Marcel Duchamp for *Néon*, nothing came out of that. Although Heisler's vision of *Néon* was a true expression of friendship and love, Surrealism could not overcome its inner polemics easily. Soon, none

⁹⁶ Lenka Bydžovská, *Surrealismus 1939-1947*, in: Švácha and Platovská 2005 (note 16), 171.

⁹⁷ Karel Srp, Toyen, Praha 2000, 319.

of the collaborators that Heisler had listed to Kiesler was left due to a disagreement with Breton over the exclusion of Roberto Matta in 1948. Although the Parisian group reconstituted itself, the last issue of *Néon* appeared in March 1949. This might have also been connected to Heisler's lost of possessions in Czechoslovakia in 1948. From his letters to Kiesler in March 1948, it is clear that Heisler was seriously considering leaving Paris for New York. '*Teige is still in Czechoslovakia, and since I have no news, I don't know when he is coming,*' wrote Heisler to Kiesler in May 1948.⁹⁸ Heisler, as a poet, felt crippled by the new language environment in Paris. Already during the occupation, he turned to object art, and he returned to this again in 1950 in a set of three 'books'—dedicated to André Breton, Benjamin Péret and Toyen. Each book consisted of a pair of shallow boxes hinged together to open like a book, while the text consisted of lines of small objects attached to a coloured background. In 1950, Heisler also collaborated with Georges Goldfayn on short film collages (not preserved) and probably his last extant work was the *Alphabet* (1952?). In January 1953, on his way to visit Breton, Jindřich Heisler died of a cardiac arrest.⁹⁹

Toyen was also struggling during her first years in Paris. She contributed with drawings for *Néon*, but the period of 1948 to 1953 was one of the most difficult for her. In 1953, Toyen was included in an exhibition together with Ernst, Tanguy, Giacometti, Paalen, and others. Her solo exhibition later that year was accompanied with a monograph with contributions by Breton, Heisler and Péret. During the period 1954-55, her work underwent a new transformation, influenced by Breton's interest in the Gallic art. The experience of the mythical sites such as Carnac that she visited with Breton, Péret and Heisler was finding its place in her work from the 1950s. Similarly than for Jorn, for Breton the Gallic and Celtic art was a break with the Classical culture, but it was also a compass helping to navigate between Surrealism and burgeoning Abstraction. For Breton and his circle the Gallic art was an example of treating the symbols of reality without imitation and usage of abstract expression without forfeiting meaning—unlike the new wave of Tachism. Yet, Toyen felt some affinity with Abstraction too, due to the theorists Charles Estienne and Edouard Jaguer, who followed her work in the 1950s. Her approach to Abstraction was rather sensualist and it culminated in 1957 in her series *Seven Unsheathed Swords*. Each painting was given its title by a member of the Surrealist group who also dedicated a short poem or reflection to the work. Hence, the result was a vivid

⁹⁸ Šmejkal 1999 (note 27), 319-331.

⁹⁹ Jindřich Toman, *The Hope of Fire - the Freedom of Dreams: Jindřich Heisler in Prague and Paris, 1938-1953*, in: Jindřich Toman and Matthew S. Witkovsky, *Jindřich Heisler, Surrealism under Pressure 1938-1953*, Chicago, New Haven and London 2012, 18-20, 106 and 114.

link between painting and text. In 1957, Toyen cemented her position within the Surrealist group when her painting *At La Coste Castle* (1946) was reproduced in Breton's key work *L'art magique*, which also made some references to her work.¹⁰⁰

Heisler and Toyen rightly guessed the development in Czechoslovakia; yet, a number of interesting events took place after they had left. In autumn 1947, Heisler succeeded in sending a reduced version of *Le surréalisme en 1947* to Prague. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue *International Surrealism* with a joined text by Jindřich Heisler and Benjamin Péret (in translation of Vratislav Effenberger), and texts by André Breton, Hans Arp (in translation of Ludvík Kundera), and Karel Teige.¹⁰¹ In his text, Teige presented the new orientation of Surrealism towards the new myth and described Surrealism as a strong living movement surviving the apocalypse of the WWII. He nevertheless admitted the conflicted situation of Surrealism in regard to Abstraction, Existentialism, Neorealism, and in regard to the 'splintered sects' of Surrealism in Paris as well as the Czech *Group Ra*, which I will pay attention to later in this chapter. According to Teige, it was important that all the currents got in touch with each other and confronted their stances and results of their work. Yet, he dismissed the 'incomplete, unreliable and mistaken' overviews of Claude Serbanne and René Renne mentioned earlier in the Danish context.¹⁰² Few months later, Teige elaborated on his thoughts on the occasion of a debate evening on Surrealism. In fact, two debate evenings were organised by the literature department of the *Artistic Association* in Prague in 1947. The December debate's speakers counted, next to Teige, Jan Grossman, Jindřich Chalupecký, Zdeněk Lorenc, Otakar Mrkvička, Václav Navrátil and Jiří Veltruský; and the audience counted up to six hundred people. Teige strongly rejected Socialist realism as practised in the Soviet union, but he also expressed his reservations towards the art of the the two groups of younger artist, the 'civilist' *Group 42* and the 'younger Surrealists' of the *Group Ra*, which he criticised for a theoretical quandary.¹⁰³ At the occasion of the debate a *Joint declaration of the referents of the discussion evening on Surrealism* was formulated and signed by the referents plus Ludvík Kundera. In the declaration, despite their different opinions, the referents agreed on a discussion within modern art and on its platform. They rejected the populism and servitude of art to any direct social or political agenda, in other words, they defended its autonomy, a move undoubtedly prompted by the exhibition of Soviet art that took place in

¹⁰⁰ Srp 2000 (note 97), 196-225.

¹⁰¹ Jiří Kotalík, ed., *Mezinárodní surrealismus*, Praha 1947.

¹⁰² Karel Teige, *Mezinárodní surrealismus*, in: Brabenec and Effenberger 1994 (note 17), 321-335.

¹⁰³ Karel Teige, [speech at the debate on Surrealism], reprinted in: Brabenec and Effenberger 1994 (note 17), 554-561; and Bydžovská 2005 (note 96), 194.

Prague earlier that year. The last words maintained a stance of *unlimited freedom of art, science, philosophy and critique*.¹⁰⁴ The debate evening was, according to Lenka Bydžovská, the last public manifestation of the avant-garde in Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁵

The December debate was only the second debate on Surrealism, it followed the November debate presenting the *Group Ra* and the ‘younger surrealists’ including Vratislav Effenberger (1923-1986), who would become an important defender Surrealism. Also the painters Václav Tikal (1906-1965) and Josef Istler (1919-2000) of the *Group Ra* agreed with Effenberger and called for the reconstitution of the Surrealist Group under the leadership of Karel Teige. This in certain way happened later around 1950, but before recounting that I would like to present the stance of the *Group Ra*. Although the group had since its inception an ambivalent relationship to the ‘orthodox’ Surrealism, in fact, it was Teige who stood behind the formation of the group. In 1944, he introduced to each other the artists and poets living in Brno: Václav Zykmund, Bohdan Lacina, Miroslav Koreček, Vilém Reichmann and Ludvík Kundera, and in Prague: Josef Istler, Václav Tikal and Zdeněk Lorenc.¹⁰⁶ The WWII, however, postponed their public presentation as a group. In 1946 they published a compilation *And While the War* presenting their works from the war years, but the internal discussions about the future direction were ongoing. In the end of 1946, Kundera and Lorenc defined their relation to Surrealism in the manifesto *Younger Surrealists* published in the Brno-based revue *Blok*. At the occasion of the exhibition *Art Tchécoslovaque 1938-1946*, Kundera and Tikal visited Paris in 1946. While in Paris, Kundera got in touch with the younger Surrealists such as Henri Goetz and Francis Bott, and launched the international activities of the *Group Ra*.¹⁰⁷ The encounter with the younger Surrealists in Paris might have encouraged further discussions in the group and the whirlpool of opinions crystallised in the beginning of 1947 in a programme declaration formulated by Kundera and Zykmund in an anthology published at the occasion of the first—and last—exhibition of the *Group Ra* in Brno (continued in Prague and two provincial towns). In their declaration, they defined Surrealism as their point of departure, but also expressed their reservations towards the automatism and psychoanalytical symbolism. What they identified with from Surrealism was the belief in the union between the artistic and political avant-garde and the worldview of dialectical materialism.¹⁰⁸ The occultism of

¹⁰⁴ Společné prohlášení referentů diskusního večera o surrealismu, published in: Brabenec and Effenberger 1994 (note 17), 561-562.

¹⁰⁵ Bydžovská 2005 (note 96), 194.

¹⁰⁶ František Šmejkal, Ra panorama, in: František Šmejkal, Skupina Ra, Praha 1988, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Šmejkal 1988; and Ludvík Kundera, Ra memoáry, both in: Šmejkal 1988 (note 106), 15, 48-49.

¹⁰⁸ Bydžovská 2005 (note 96), 193-194; and Šmejkal 1988 (note 106), 15.

postwar Breton felt foreign and snobbish and caused a shock for the *Group Ra*. When they were offered to participate in the exhibition *Surréalisme en 1947*, they refused to do so. The artistic shock was followed by a political one: Breton's rupture with the Communist Party. Although especially Lorenc and Zykmond condemned the Soviet Socialist realism exhibited in Prague in 1947, they believed in the cooperation with the Communist Party. In 1948 Zykmond organised a meeting of artists and poets in Brno, where they adopted a decision that they would not attack the cultural policy of the Communist Party from the outside, but would try to transform it from within.¹⁰⁹ In this spirit, the *Group Ra* entered a collaboration with *Le surréalisme-révolutionnaire*, whose manifesto was sent to the group by Noël Arnaud and was followed by the invitation to the *International Congress of the Revolutionary Surrealists* in Brussels sent by Christian Dotremont. The congress took place in October 1947 and the *Group Ra* was represented by Josef Istler and Zdeněk Lorenc, while Arnaud and Dotremont represented the French and Belgian groups respectively. The Danish group was represented by Asger Jorn, who contacted the *Group Ra* already in May 1947 (the contact was facilitated by the French duo Renne—Serbanne). According to Lorenc, who informed about the meeting at the November discussion on Surrealism, the delegates to the conference were amazed that in the country on its way to socialism the existence of the post-surrealist *Group Ra* meant a reconciliation of the conflict between the progressive politics and progressive art.¹¹⁰ The congress declarations were published in a bulletin in January 1948 followed by the one and only issue of a magazine in March—April. After the Communist Party critique of the cycle of lectures and an exhibition organised by the French group, the group lost its raison d'être and disbanded in April 1948. The Belgian, Danish and Czech groups became closer with the Dutch experimental group and made plans for future collaboration. The 1948 events in Czechoslovakia, however, prevented the *Group Ra* from taking part in the next conference in Paris in November 1948, after which *Cobra* was founded. Only because he left his graphics in Brussels in 1947, Istler could be included in the *Cobra* exhibitions in Brussels and in Amsterdam in 1949. During 1948, the contacts between the groups were still lively, especially between *Cobra* and the revue *Blok* which Kundera co-edited. Yet, neither the revue *Blok* nor the *Group Ra* had long future; the last issue of *Blok* came out in 1949 and the *Group Ra* fell apart by the end of 1948. Hence, also the newly established network spreading across the postwar Europe yet undivided by the Iron Curtain was torn apart. Around 1947, the *Group Ra* was, mainly

¹⁰⁹ Marie Mžuková, Václav Zykmond, Olomouc 1992, 8.

¹¹⁰ Kundera 1988 (note 107),; and Zdeněk Lorenc, Na oknech jsou klapky, both in: Šmejkal 1988 (note 106), 50, 55 and 67-68.

thanks to Ludvík Kundera, in touch with the Rumanian Surrealists, the Austrian revue *Plan*, the Hungarian group *Európai Iskola*, and with Claude Serbanne, who included the *Group Ra* into the anthology *Tvivlens Plageaand*.¹¹¹ But any closer collaboration was made impossible after 1948. Regarding the relations of the *Group Ra* in Czechoslovakia, they were less conflictual as we might imagine. The most confrontational of all was Václav Zykmond (1914-1984), who tried to define himself against Teige as well as his generational peers. In 1948, he caused an uproar by an article for the Austrian magazine *Plan*, when he described the artists who had exhibited during the occupation (as those of the *Group 42*) as non-avant-garde and opportunist. At that time, since 1947, he didn't continue as a painter and instead pursued a career in children movies and later in art history.¹¹² During the 1950s as well as the following decades, he was acting on the borders of what was possible considering the political situation, as in his study *What is realism?* influenced by Henri Lefebvre.¹¹³ In his letter to Kiesler, Heisler described with amusement the crash of *Le surréalisme-révolutionnaire*, but this didn't mean a hostility between Heisler and the *Group Ra*. Ludvík Kundera described the relationship with Teige, Toyen and Heisler as a fruitful exchange of opinions, which was unfortunately cut off too early.¹¹⁴ After 1948, two other members of the *Group Ra*, Istler and Tikal, joined the circle of Karel Teige.

If the *Group Ra* represented a revisionism of Surrealism parallel to *Høst* and *Cobra*, what would be an antidote to their activities on the Czech scene comparable to *Linien II*? Interestingly, Concrete art has not gained any popularity in Czech art until around 1960. Hence, we have to follow other than formal criteria when looking for an opposition to the 'revisionist' Surrealism. The year 1948—when *Linien II* defined itself and thus created a counterpart to the Danish artists in *Cobra*—was also crucial for the Czech artists. However, the line of demarcation did not run between those preferring spontaneous expression and those who adopted the Concrete art. Rather, it ran between those who accommodated to the official Socialist realism (to various extents) and those who retained their freedom. The groups active during the occupation, such as the *Group Ra* and *Group 42* fell apart due to the disagreements over the Socialist realism and some of their progressive members gravitated back towards Karel Teige. While working on his book *Phenomenology of Modern Art* (unfinished), Teige was also trying to get in touch with younger like-minded

¹¹¹ Šmejkal 1988 (note 106); and Kundera 1988 (note 107), both in: Šmejkal 1988 (note 106), 21-23 and 50-51.

¹¹² Mžýková 1992 (109), 8.

¹¹³ Václav Zykmond, *Co je realismus?: pokus o vymezení kategorie realismu*, Praha 1957.

¹¹⁴ A letter of Jindřich Heisler to Frederick Kiesler from 17. 5. 1948; and Ludvík Kundera, untitled (JH očima svých současníků), both in: Šmejkal 1999 (note 27), 327 and 357.

artists and poets. In the period 1948-1950, a new group slowly formed around him. It included former members of the *Group Ra* such as Václav Tikal and Josef Istler, as well as a former member of the *Group 42*, Jan Kotík. Moreover, the group counted Mikuláš Medek (1926-1974) and his future wife Emila Tlásková, Libor Fára and the theoretician—and after Teige's death the leader of the group—Vratislav Effenberger. Since 1951 they would publish monthly anthologies titled after the zodiac signs. The anthologies were published in a unique issue containing typed text, drawing, photography and reproductions of paintings. The first of the anthologies was compiled by Effenberger in 1951 under the sign of Aquarius with the works of Václav Tikal, Josef Istler and Jan Kotík. The issue also included a questionnaire on Surrealism prepared by Effenberger. The answers showed that the Surrealist position was not a must, since e.g. Mikuláš and Emila Medek did not consider themselves Surrealists. The collaborative activities of the anthology group came to a halt abruptly with the death of Karel Teige in 1951 and the last (tenth) anthology was published as an homage to Teige. Yet, already in 1953 the idea of the anthologies was revived by Effenberger in the issue of *Objekt*. *Objekt* itself could probably easily have ended up as an ephemeral revival, after two issues of 1953 the third issue came out only in 1958 to be followed by two more in the early 1960s.¹¹⁵ From the most important artists involved with the Zodiac anthologies, both Josef Istler and Mikuláš Medek were trying to reconcile Surrealism with informal Abstraction. In the 1950s Istler produced a series of figures or objects arranged in disturbing still lives until he turned to pure abstraction around 1956. Medek also departed from Surrealism in his early works from around 1947 followed by an 'existential' period 1952-1957. Although he had many reservations towards existentialism, he was fascinated by the moment of a limit situation disguised as everyday mundanity. The proportions of his figures were becoming more and more deformed and turned into abstract geometrical shapes later enhanced by the reduction of the colours.¹¹⁶

Yet, the Zodiac group had also its counterpart. This was the *Midnight Edition* (1949-1955) which grouped around the poet Egon Bondy (1930-2007). Bondy, who later became an important figure of the underground culture, started as a Surrealist and was also in a loose touch with Karel Teige. The crossroads from which 'his' group departed in different direction than the Teige—Effenberger group was yet another Surrealist anthology titled *Jewish Names* (1948-1949), assembled by Bondy and Jana Krejcarová. Vratislav Effenberger also contributed into it, as well as Karel Hynek, Oldřich Wenzl a Jan Zuska,

¹¹⁵ Lenka Bydžovská, Surrealismus, existencialismus, explosionismus, in: Švácha and Platovská 2005 (note 16), 394-398.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, 400-405.

three other poets represented in the already mentioned discussion evening of the *Group Ra* and the younger Surrealists in November 1947. To fight a new wave of antisemitism, the poets adopted Jewish names on this occasion. Zbyněk Fišer would keep his new name—Egon Bondy—for the rest of his life. What separated Bondy from the group of Teige and Effenberger? Bondy himself has answered this question in retrospect: the avant-garde suffered in his eyes from a great social responsibility which manifested itself among other things in the Bretonian discipline. The Dionysian nature of Bondy, especially after his involvement with Jana Krejcarová, became just unacceptable for the Surrealists like Effenberger. Not before long, besides the life attitudes, also their aesthetic criteria parted, leading Bondy close to what was known as the Beat generation in the American context. Analogically, Bondy claimed, the artist Vladimír Boudník has moved to a form of Abstract Expressionism.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the groups were in touch and Bondy respected Teige and would frequently meet with Mikuláš Medek. Yet, for Medek as well as Effenberger and others, Bondy's outspoken affiliations to Marxism (Trotskyism) and revolutionary rhetorics, as well as his extravagant lifestyle and quasi-primitivist desertion from the 'high' fine art, made him an *infant terrible*.¹¹⁸ Another temporarily Surrealist artist close to Bondy was Zbyněk Sekal. Yet, among all the artists, Bondy was closest to already mentioned Vladimír Boudník, the only artist who offered a radical alternative to Surrealism in his own -ism, namely Explosionalism.¹¹⁹ In his efforts, Boudník revived the social engagement of the avant-garde, whose paternalistic version Bondy previously rejected in Teige's group. However, Boudník's very authentic version of the engagement must have been irresistible for his contemporaries, as I will show in the next chapter.

* * *

Both Denmark and Czechoslovakia had since the mid-1930s active Surrealist groups. These, however, underwent a severe crises during the 1940s. The attempts to surpass Surrealism led to various efforts to either synthesise Surrealism with Abstraction or to abandon it totally. Surrealism, however, played an irreplaceable role in the transition of the younger generation of artists to as different results as Concrete art or 'Explosionalism'.

¹¹⁷ Stanislav Dvorský, *Kavárna Westend 1947-1951 a sborník Židovská jména*, in: Martin Machovec, ed., *Židovská jména 1949*, Praha 1995, 6-7.

¹¹⁸ Martin Machovec, *Od avantgardy přes podzemí do undergroundu*, in: Josef Alan, ed., *Alternativní kultura: příběh české společnosti 1945-1989*, Praha 2001, 164.

¹¹⁹ Bydžovská 2005 (note 115), 387-388.

Chapter 4: The Legacy of Bauhaus

Although Bauhaus was forced to close down in 1933, the influence it had on many artists was lasting and in some cases equal to that of Surrealism. What attracted to Bauhaus were the progressive methods of teaching, the synthesis of art and architecture and the social engagement which was often attached to it. This chapter will be focused on different attempts to bring art into architecture or closer to the people, the relation of art to the industrial production or its environment and other issues closely linked to Bauhaus which had a strong revival in Denmark and Czechoslovakia during the late 1940s and 1950s.

The only Danish artist that studied at Bauhaus, under Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, was Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen.¹²⁰ By 1937, the fascination with Kandinsky was displayed at the *Linien* exhibition and the following year architect Robert Dahlmann Olsen travelled to Paris, where he together with Ejler Bille visited Kandinsky.¹²¹ Twenty years after *Linien*, at the occasion of Kandinsky's retrospective at the *Statens Museum for Kunst* in 1957, Dahlmann Olsen reminded that the influence of Kandinsky on the *spontaneists* could not be overestimated.¹²² Asger Jorn knew Bauhaus from the books in the Silkeborg library and after having decided for an artistic career in 1936, he would have gone to study to Bauhaus. Only when he learned that it had been closed, he went to Paris—to Kandinsky. Since Kandinsky didn't have any school, Jorn finally joined the studio of Fernand Léger.¹²³ Jorn has also always highly respected Bjerke-Petersen, especially for his book *Symbols in Abstract Art* (1933). In his book *Pour la forme* (1958), Jorn described Bjerke-Petersen's book as a precursor of *Cobra* art in its belief in the symbolic value of Abstract art.¹²⁴ In 1954, he planned a French edition of the *Symbols in Abstract Art* in collaboration with Claude Serbanne, but due to the financial difficulties and lost touch with Serbanne, nothing came out of this plan.¹²⁵ At that time, Jorn was already involved in his own interpretation of Bauhaus, the *International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus*, when he got involved with similar issues in northern Italy as Bjerke-Petersen at the same time in Sweden. But Jorn's post-*Cobra* activities call also for another comparison, namely with the work of Paul Gadegaard in Herning. Due to the fact that Jorn's activities in the *Imaginist*

¹²⁰ Friis Hansen 2006 (note 74), 122.

¹²¹ Lambert 1983 (note 76), 31; and Robert Dahlmann Olsen and Nina Dahlmann Olsen, *Arkitektur og billedkunst i collageform - dagbog 1938*, Dragør 1990, 28-29.

¹²² Robert Dahlmann Olsen, *Kandinsky udstilling på kunstmusæet*, Arkitektur, 1957, 68-69.

¹²³ Asger Jorn, *Om sig selv*, in: *Kunst*, vol. I, 1953-54, 8.

¹²⁴ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 34-36.

¹²⁵ Jaguer, in: Renne and Serbanne 1979 (note 77), 92-93.

Bauhaus were recently thoroughly scrutinised and I pay attention to some of its aspects in the first chapter, this chapter will be more focused on the work of Paul Gadegaard and other aspects of the Bauhaus afterlife in Denmark.¹²⁶

Despite the fascination with Bauhaus, no similar school has appeared in Denmark until 1962, when the *Kunsthøjskole* was founded by Ulrika Marseen—an artist who was a member of *Spiralen*—first in Dronningmølle and from 1963 on in Holbæk.¹²⁷ Yet, the attempts to create a Danish version of Bauhaus were older. In spring 1944, young students at the Royal Academy of Arts were dissatisfied with the Academy to such an extent, that there were—despite the occupation—plans for opening a new art school with more progressive teachers. During his last year in Denmark, Bjerke-Petersen explained in the newspapers that this would be the only solution, if the Academy was not to undergo radical changes. He proposed an education based on collectivity and plurality, which he experienced at ‘a large private school in Germany’ where he studied.¹²⁸ Bjerke-Petersen perhaps hoped to take the vacant position of a teacher at the Academy and modernise it, but he was soon forced to flee to Sweden instead. During his stay in the U.S.A. in 1946-1947, he was offered a position at an art school in San Francisco, but he decided to settle down in Sweden.¹²⁹ In 1948, he founded *Moderna Konstskolan* in Stockholm, which was in 1955 transformed to *Kursverksamheten* of Stockholm University. The same year, he also applied for a teaching position at *Valands Konstskola* in Gothenburg and a year later, also in vain, at *Konstfackskolan* in Stockholm. Thus, it was only at *Moderna Konstskolan* that Bjerke-Petersen could realise the teaching methods he had experienced at Bauhaus. Besides teaching, he entered a collaboration with the *Rörstrand* porcelain factory in 1951, for which he created designs intended for production. Yet, most of them remained studio pieces. The work with ceramics inspired him to use ceramics also in the decorations for architecture. In 1953, he got a chance to make a ceramic mosaics for the Halmstad city library followed in 1954-56 by a decoration of the sports centre, also in Halmstad—the hometown of his old friend Eric Olson. It was also in Halmstad that Bjerke-Petersen died in 1957. Many of his ideas stayed, however, preserved in the book *Konkret Konst* published in 1956.¹³⁰ The book was a collection of his thoughts on Concrete art since 1946 and included parts of the previously unpublished book *Vita Nova* completed in 1954. The last

¹²⁶ Pezolet 2012 (note 13).

¹²⁷ Paul Schäfer, *Stensommerfuglen – Billedhuggeren Ulrika Marseen*, Holbæk 1992.

¹²⁸ Att., *En fri Malerskole som Protest mod Akademiet?*, BT, 30. 03. 1944, 5.

¹²⁹ Scout., *Dansk Abstrakt-Maler der vil erobre Amerika*, Ekstrabladet, 16. 9. 1947, 1-2.

¹³⁰ Troels Andersen, *Biography*, in: Friis Hansen 2006 (note 120), 135; and Thorsen 1987 (note 71) 38-39.

chapters *Art and architecture* and *Organic decoration* reflected his interest in the possibilities of Concrete art in architecture and design (mainly ceramics), respectively. In the text on art in architecture, he underlined the social function of the artist and pleaded for the collaboration between the architects and artists from the very beginning of the projects and for a creation of an environment rather than a decoration. This words echoed André Bloc, who provided him with reproductions of the international projects. Richard Winther provided reproductions from Denmark, but only two examples were included in the book: the ceiling painting of a romanesque church in Hover by Mogens Jørgensen (1955) and the decoration of the *Angli* canteen in Herning by Paul Gadegaard.¹³¹

In 1956, there were not many contemporary examples of art in public architecture in Denmark. In another book from 1956, *Art in European Architecture* by Paul Damaz, with a preface by Le Corbusier, one can read that the achievements in the Nordic countries were ‘uneven in value’ and while ‘Sweden is outstanding for its number of interesting works’ due to the ‘help given by the central government and municipal authorities,’ in ‘Denmark and Finland, mural painting and sculpture are reduced to decorative vignettes or medallions having no connection with the architecture.’¹³² The problem seems clear here—Denmark lacked an institutional support for the collaboration of architects and artists, although some attempts had been made elsewhere. At the Academy, a committee was set up for the collaboration between architects and artists to work on joint projects, but without any real outcome. In 1952, thirteen artists were invited to make ‘room decorations’ at the *Artists’ Autumn Exhibition*, Albert Mertz, Helge Ernst, Frede Christoffersen and Knud Nielsen among them. This was repeated in 1953 with Sven Dalsgaard, Preben Hornung and Søren Georg Jensen among others. But that year, an indirect but effective step towards the state support of art in architecture was taken, when artists demonstrated for higher state support for art, such as studios and subsidies, in front of the parliament. As a result, the *Statens Kunstfond* was established three years later in 1956. Instead of the subsidies for free art, this institution supported monumental decorations of public buildings, until its agenda changed in 1964.¹³³ Yet, although many artists desired to collaborate with the architects, it is quite questionable if the architects shared the artists’ enthusiasm, which would mean to include them at the very early stage of planning, rather than leaving them ‘a wall’ of the completed structure. This becomes clear from the article

¹³¹ Vilhelm Bjerke Petersen, *Konkret Kunst*, Stockholm/Halmstad 1956.

¹³² Paul Damaz, *Art in European Architecture*, New York 1956, 83.

¹³³ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 179; and Statens Kunstfond, in: *Den store danske Gyldendals åbne encyclopædi*, http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Samfund,_jura_og_politik/Samfund/Ministerier,_styrelser,_udvalg_og_r%C3%A5d/Statens_Kunstfond, retrieved 5. 6. 2013.

Who dares to use an artist in a modern building today? (1957) by architect Finn Bentsen, in which he reacted to the debate about *Statens Kunstfond* in the magazine *Arkitekten*.¹³⁴

Yet, there were examples of art in architecture in Denmark already before 1956. Only they were not in collaboration with architects and did not enjoy the state support (this was in many cases substituted by the *Ny Carlsbergfondet*). To these belonged the collective ‘experiments’ of the *Høst/Cobra* artists, as well as projects of the *Linien II* artists, which were mostly private enterprises as at *Angli* in Herning. The circle of *Høst/Cobra* had an advantage that their ranks included Robert Dahlmann Olsen, an architect who burned for the collaboration. He was present both in Bregnerød in 1949 and at the previous collective decoration of the kindergarten in Hjortøgade in Copenhagen in mid-forties. Dahlmann Olsen was, however, more writing than building. As late as 1960, he was still thinking of a joint project in a close collaboration with Jorn and the *spontaneists*, but nothing came out of this and Dahlmann Olsen became rather architect of artists’ houses than their collaborator in projects for public buildings. In 1947, he designed a house for Henry Heerup and a studio for Robert Jacobsen.¹³⁵ But his writings are today an important source of information. In one of his texts on Asger Jorn’s architecture decoration, Dahlmann Olsen highlighted, that the spontaneous character of the decoration excluded any control from the architect or the client, which required an absolute trust to the artist. But there could be barely any talk about the collaboration between artist and architect, in most cases the houses had been build long before it was decorated.¹³⁶ This became a curse of both *Cobra* and *Linien II* artists when working in architecture.

Among the artists of *Linien II*, it were mainly Ib Geertsen, Gunnar Aagaard Andersen and Paul Gadegaard, that were attracted to the architectural space and the social engagement attached to it. In 1954 Geertsen designed his famous crawling sculpture (first casted in 1957) that combined the strict aesthetics of seriality with the playfulness of its purpose, while Aagaard Andersen was since 1951 engaged in the group *Espace* formed around André Bloc and operating in the field of social urbanism, art and architecture. In 1954, along with Sven Hauptmann, Robert Jacobsen and Richard Mortensen, Andersen took part in the group’s outdoors exhibitions in Biot, southern France. A real chance to collaborate with architects came in 1956 from Herning, where he together with architects

¹³⁴ Finn Bentsen, *Hvem tør I dag bruge en billedkunstner i moderne byggeri?*, in: *Kunst*, vol. V, 1957-58, 19-23; and *Arkitekten*, Månedshæfte, vol. LVIII, 1956, 65-96.

¹³⁵ Tine Blicher-Moritz, *Værket på væggen – Et kunsthistorisk essay om Asger Jorns Dragørværk*, København 2008, 6 and 34.

¹³⁶ Robert Dahlman Olsen, *Lidt om Arkitektur og Billedkunst*, *Arkitekten*, Ugehæfte, no. 51, 1944, 217-218.

Karen and Jan Eggen designed a striking showroom pavilion for the carpet factory *Egetæpper*.¹³⁷ But it was another *Linien II* artist, Paul Gadegaard (1920-1996), whose name became connected to Herning even more profoundly. His longtime engagement at *Angli*, a factory specialised in shirts, started by decoration of the canteen in 1952—that is the same year as Asger Jorn published his article *Potential of Mural Painting*.¹³⁸

The *Angli* factory founded by Aage Damgaard was flourishing since the WWII, and in the early 1950s, Damgaard was looking for a way to secure himself a social status corresponding to his successful business. He decided to take the same path as other factory-owners in Herning and started collecting art. First at *Grønningen*, but this changed in 1952, when he visited *Mobilia* exhibition at *Forum*. Paul Gadegaard held a small workshop there under which he was working—in front of a public—on large-scale decorative panels. This made such an impression on Damgaard, that he not only bought the panels for a school in Herning, but also hired Gadegaard to redecorate the *Angli* canteen. It is somewhat paradoxical, that the architect of the canteen was Hans Erling Langkilde, one of the main voices in the discussion on collaboration of architects and artists after the law about *Statens Kunstfond* was passed in 1956. Moreover, his article *Arts – Architecture*, by which he expressed himself on the topic, was illustrated by two examples of Concretist canteens: by Hans Christian Høyer at *A/S Holger Petersen*, and by Knud Nielsen with a sculpture by Ulrika Marseen at *B&W*.¹³⁹ The canteen at *Angli* was not mentioned by a single word, but since the canteen stood ready since 1948, it is apparent that no real collaboration took place there. Gadegaard changed the canteen radically. Three large paintings (the largest 6 x 2 meters) were fitted in the room by making other changes in the interior. Similarly as at *Forum*, Gadegaard was painting the panels for the canteen in front of the factory employees, which had an educative character on the one hand and underlined the performativity of his painting on the other. Thus, Damgaard's passion for art was for the first time 'imposed' on his employees. The reactions of the employees probably largely differed from that of Damgaard. An anecdote was told by a former employee: one of his colleagues was watching Gadegaard by his work, and when she thought she found something familiar, she asked the artist, to his absolute outrage,

¹³⁷ Thorsen 1987 (note 71), 147, 154 and 185-197; Olaf Lind, *Jutland Architecture Guide*, Copenhagen 2002, 99; and Marianne Barbusse, *Socialt engagement og idealisme i den konkrete kunst*, in: Sabroe 1988 (note 89), 24-29.

¹³⁸ Asger Jorn, *The Inherent Potential of Mural Painting*, originally published as 'Om Væggmåleriets Möjligheter', in: *Konstrevy*, Stockholm, vol. XXVIII, no. 4/5, 1952, reprinted in: Baumeister 2011 (note 6), 247-253.

¹³⁹ Hans Erling Langkilde: *Billedkunst-bygningskunst*, in: *Arkitekten*, Månedsheft, vol. LVIII, 1956, 76-79.

whether it was a locomotive what he was about to paint. But Damgaard tried to spread understanding of art through lectures—Gadegaard was e.g. giving lectures during the lunch breaks, but also talking to the single employees to deepen the mutual understanding.¹⁴⁰

There is no doubt that the Danish art history would be poorer without Aage Damgaard, but it is also interesting to look at his motives for investment in art. These become apparent from an interview with Damgaard from after the completion of the canteen transformation. In the interview, Damgaard makes clear that he gave Gadegaard free hands, but when asked in connection to his program of ‘art at the workplace’, if he was an idealist, Damgaard resolutely refuses and explains, that he is a realist who produces shirts. If the shirts are to be sold, they should be better than those from the competition, which requires a better labour force. And that is secured not only through wage, but also the working conditions—e.g. art at the working place.¹⁴¹ He was an owner of a factory and as such he hoped to get most of the money invested in art back. The support of art was not a pure philanthropy, it was a combination of the desire of a *nouveau riche* for a social status, branding of his company and an attempt to get better work from his employees, who worked under highly rationalised production conditions. What it resulted into was nevertheless one of the most important projects of the Danish Concrete art in architecture. Three years after the completion of the canteen, Gadegaard was called back to Herning and became *Angli*’s employee and art adviser with stable income plus expenses. In 1957, the old factory became too small for growing *Angli* and Damgaard asked Arne Jacobsen to design a new factory for him. But nothing came out of this and thus—again—no collaboration between architect and artist took place. Instead, *Angli* moved to another old factory. There, in the so called Black Factory, Gadegaard got a chance to undertake one of his largest projects, which took place from 1957 to 1961. According to his own words, Gadegaard was about to make ‘Denmark’s largest social realist mural.’¹⁴² The paradox was, that it was created in a freedom from negotiating with any architect or any public authority, a freedom granted by a ‘capitalist realist’ Aage Damgaard. But how did Gadegaard’s social engagement manifest in his works at *Angli*? The answer probably is, that his goal was to make a better environment for the workers in the reality as it was, rather than to radically change their lives and social position by fighting for a new reality.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ejgil Søholm, *Angli gjorde det - Aage Damgaard og kunsten*, København 1992, 21-26 and 34.

¹⁴¹ Walter Schwartz, *Trist hvis man ikke har sans for det unyttige – Skjortefabrikant i Herning den første i provinsen, der praktiserer “Kunst på arbejdspladsen”*, *Politiken* 30.8.1953; reprinted in: Søholm 1992 (note 140), 26-30.

¹⁴² Søholm 1992 (note 140), 31-32.

¹⁴³ Poul L. Andersen: [interview with] Paul Gadegaard, in: *Kunst*, vol. V, 1957-58, 94.

When looking for a formal opposite of the canteen at *Angli*, Folmer Bendtsen's mural *Fyraften* in the canteen of the *Radiohuset* from 1948-51 would be a candidate. Bendtsen, who explained his work in an article *Ideological battle on the wall*, depicted in his social realist mural a shipyard and a building site to get the radio employees in touch with the everyday reality of the workers, whose connection with culture was in most cases mediated exclusively by the radio.¹⁴⁴ Shipyards and various factories were also a realm of Victor Brockdorff (1911-1992). Next to the large decorations for the Danish Communist Party—as for its congress in 1952—Brockdorff's interest lay in the depiction of the everyday life. In an attempt to contribute to a closer connection between art and the everyday, he started to draw and paint at diverse factories. In 1952, he worked e.g. at *Titan* in Nørrebro as well as at *B&W*, where he returned in 1954, and throughout his career he worked at many other industrial workplaces such as steelworks in Frederiksværk. While his pictures confronted the publics with the reality of the modern industrial society, they were at the same time one of the examples, how art was made for the people and 'among the people'. Brockdorff himself claimed that he got such a good response from the workers, that his paintings were almost a 'collective process'.¹⁴⁵ But were they also good art?

To return to *Angli*, it is needless to say that Aage Damgaard was not interested in visits of artist as Brockdorff. In an already cited interview from 1953, Damgaard claimed that what mattered was the ability of the canteen to provide his employees with a relaxed atmosphere, the formal questions didn't play any role. With Gadegaard, they agreed that the decorations were not to be a 'picture book', which one gradually becomes tired of. Instead, Damgaard encouraged Gadegaard to make what he wanted, the employees would get used to it if it became good.¹⁴⁶ Maybe it was exactly this encouragement, that proved the Concrete painting politically impotent. In an interview from 1956, Gadegaard maintained that the society would like to use art, but for the cups in the royal porcelain manufactory.¹⁴⁷ This was perhaps the situation of Bjerke-Petersen at *Rörstrand*, but how much more revolutionary was he himself? In any case, it does not seem that he was turning the tables on a snobbish factory-owner, rather, he was being recouped as a loyal employee in the service of profit.

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¹⁴⁴ Folmer Bentsen, *Idékamp på muren*, in: *Arkitekten*, Månedshæfte, vol. LVIII, 1956, 91-93.

¹⁴⁵ Hanne Abildgaard, Victor Brockdorff; and Thomas Lyngby, Victor Brockdorffs skildringer af industrien, both in: Jette Bie Junker and Thomas Lyngby, eds., *Victor Brockdorff*, Broager/København 2001, 23-24 and 47-51.

¹⁴⁶ Schwartz 1953 (note 141), 26-28.

¹⁴⁷ Andersen 1957-58 (note 143), 91.

If we look for a direct connection to Bauhaus in Czechoslovakia, this would lead us again to Karel Teige. Teige gave lectures at Bauhaus in years 1929-1930 and he was a promoter of Bauhaus style constructivism in architecture. However, in art he preferred Surrealism to the Bauhaus-like Abstraction. Regarding the progressive teaching methods, Teige has never been teaching at any school, but in 1945, he expressed his reservations towards the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at the occasion of the planned reformation of the academy. Teige condemned the rigidity of the professors and proposed a thorough transformation of the art education. The art school should have seen its goal in providing the students with a grounding in both craft and ideology, he maintained. Distinguished modern artists and theoreticians should be called in instead of the old academicians, and the competencies of the architecture, industrial design and art schools should be defined, so that they would not interfere.¹⁴⁸ The last point opens also Teige's lukewarm attitude to the so called synthesis of arts. The synthesis became a buzzword especially after the WWII, not least due to the secretary of CIAM Siegfried Giedion. Compared to Denmark, the ties with CIAM were tighter in Czechoslovakia, but not in a 'vassal' sense. The Prague group, led by Teige, was also preparing for the first postwar congress of CIAM in Bridgwater, Great Britain, in 1947. The congress was supposed to deal with regional planning and architectural expression. While another group in Brno was dealing with the former, the Prague group was mainly interested in the latter. For the congress, Giedion prepared together with Hans Arp a questionnaire concerning the synthesis of arts. The theme of the questionnaire provoked Teige, who decided to accompany it with a short study refuting the legitimacy of the synthesis of arts.¹⁴⁹ In a letter from February 1947, he strictly rejected the new efforts to connect architecture with arts, which were, according to Teige, first of all a good business for painters and sculptors. In the end, Teige didn't attend the congress, and he didn't finish his study either. Nevertheless, his notes titled *Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* give us a clear idea that his text would not have pleased Giedion.¹⁵⁰

The integration of art into architecture was very lively discussed in Czechoslovakia. In 1947, a large exhibition *Monumental Assignment of the Contemporary Art* took place at the exhibition hall of *Mánes*. The social dimension of the monumental art was a part of the discussion on the changing function of art in modern society at least since the end of the

¹⁴⁸ Karel Teige, O reformě Akademie výtvarných umění, in: Kytice I, no. 2, 1945, 83-85, partly reprinted in: Brabenec and Effenberger 1994 (note 17), 517-518.

¹⁴⁹ Marcela Hanáčková, Česká poválečná skupina CIAM a Team 10, in: Stavba 16, no. 5, 2009, 78.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem; and Teige's letters to Marie Pospíšilová January-February 1947, quoted in: Vratislav Effenberger, Vývojová cesta, in: Brabenec and Effenberger 1994 (note 17), 628-629.

1930s in the 'kunstverain' *Mánes*. As Pavel Smetana explained in the catalogue, the task of the contemporary art was to come out from the private sphere and enter the public forum.¹⁵¹ The reactions from the architects were positive. Oldřich Starý, the editor in chief of the magazine *Architektura ČSR* welcomed the effort in his note under the exhibition review. '*Great tasks which the architects have to deal with today as well as in the near future require still more and more intense collaboration with painters and sculptors,*' wrote Starý and he expressed a hope that the new rebuilding period would provide many opportunities for a synthesis of architecture and modern art grown out of the times.¹ There was a warning bell against historicism and kitsch in Starý's last words, and these really became a reality rather soon. One of the last attempts to reconcile modernist and realistic monumental art supported by the state was the already mentioned *Slavic Agricultural Exhibition* in Prague in 1948 directed by Jiří Kroha. Another example could be Jaroslav Fragner's reconstruction of *Carolinum* (1947-1950), the rectorate of Charles University in Prague, for which he commissioned soberly modernist and classicist works by artists such as Vladimír Sychra, Karel Pokorný and Richard Wiesner. Yet, all the serious and free discussions about the social purpose of art and the 'mission' of a modern artist in the society were soon halted by the new rhetorics of 1948. The discussion was only brought back to life in the late 1950s in connection with the Expo 1958 in Brussels.¹⁵³

The success of the Czechoslovak pavilion in Brussels is inextricable linked to the monumental iron and glass sculpture *Sun, air, water* (1957-58) by Jan Kotík (1916-2002). Although the finished sculpture shocked the party approval inspection by its abstract nature, it was approved after it was explained as a decorative presentation of the new glass production and not least because of its enormous costs.¹⁵⁴ The previous decade was for Kotík marked by constraints. In 1948, the *Group 42*—which he was a member of—fell apart because of the disagreement among its members on the issue of Socialist realism. The issue was opened already in 1947 at the occasion of the official exhibition of Soviet art in Prague. Kotík strongly rejected the version of Socialist realism as presented by the Soviet Union and considered it the greatest obstacle in creating the art of a new socialist époque.¹⁵⁵ He expressed his views on the new place of art in the socialist society also in his article

¹⁵¹ Monumentální úkol současného výtvarnictví, Praha 1947.

¹⁵² V. Kurzweilová, Monumentální úkol současného výtvarnictví; and Oldřich Starý (poznámka [note]), in: *Architektura ČSR*, 1947, 257.

¹⁵³ Tereza Petišková, Monumentální umění čtyřicátých let, in: Švácha and Platovská 2005 (note 16), 197-205.

¹⁵⁴ Iva Mladičová, Jan Kotík 1916-2002, Praha 2011, 57.

¹⁵⁵ Z poznámek Jana Kotíka, in: *Výtvarné umění XVII*, no. 7, 1967, 323; quoted in: Mladičová 2011 (note 154), 46.

Monumental Painting written at the occasion of the exhibition *Monumental Assignment of the Contemporary Art*. Kotík saw the loss of monumental art in connection to the loss of the 'collective space' caused by the individualism of the bourgeois society. While the collective space was to be reclaimed, the monumental art should find its place in worker's clubs modelled as collective apartments. The new impulses were coming, according to Kotík, from a new socialist époque and its social security, which would be at the same time supported by art. The political importance of art lay for Kotík exactly in this reciprocity.¹⁵⁶

In 1947, Jan Kotík had his first larger retrospective. His paintings were formally departing from Cubism and in general dealt with the mechanisation of the human life.¹ For the period of next ten years, it would also become the last public presentation of his work. In the following decade, he redirected his attention to design and his paintings remained a private affair. This was also the case of many other artists including Václav Tikal or Josef Istler, but Kotík's interest in design was genuine, he considered design equal to fine arts. In 1947, he started to work for the *Central administration for folk and artistic production (ÚLUV)*, where he led design studios and model workshops. He experimented with ceramics and glass and his collection of vases was also presented at the design triennial in Milan in 1957. He also published theoretical reflections on design and artist's role in the process of production and since 1948 he was a member of the editorial board of the magazine *Tvar*. In 1954 was published his book *Tradition and culture of Czechoslovak production* on folk as well as industrial design in Czechoslovakia. The position in *ÚLUV* allowed Kotík to continue his travels abroad. Already in 1947 he visited Geneva, Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Stockholm and London, in 1948 he visited Bucharest and a year later Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, he was mainly interested in the work of Mondrian and probably totally missed the activities of *Cobra*.¹⁵⁸ Yet, another trip connected to design, namely ceramics, brought him some years later in touch with Asger Jorn. The whole story has been recounted in detail in a study by Tomáš Pospiszyl. Already in 1947, Jorn met another Czech artist and designer, Pravoslav Rada, who was staying in Copenhagen during his internship. With an interruption between 1948 and 1953, Jorn and Rada stayed in touch until the mid-1960s. Hence, Rada, and through him also Kotík, as well as Josef Istler of the former *Group Ra*, could be invited to Albisola for a ceramic workshop (Istler didn't manage to obtain a passport). This was organised by Jorn in

¹⁵⁶ Jan Kotík, *Monumentální malba* (1947), *Život XX, 1946-1947*, č. 6, 148 and 157-160, partly reprinted in: Iva Mladičová, *Jan Kotík 1916-2002*, Praha 2013, 40-41.

¹⁵⁷ Mladičová 2011 (note 154), 42-46.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem, 50-54 and 60; and Mladičová 2013 (note 156), 117.

connection to the *First World Congress of the Free Artists* in nearby Alba, attended among others by Guy Debord. Due to the difficulties with bureaucracy, both Rada and Kotík arrived only after the congress was finished, and thus they just joint their signatures under the resolution. They would stay in Albisola for about two weeks and experiment in the pottery workshop of Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio. Kotík brought with himself also few works on paper, which were similar to Jorn's work at the time, although the two of them had never met before.¹⁵⁹ The meeting with Jorn assured Kotík that the path he undertook was promising. The expressive features of his abstract paintings became even stronger in years 1956-1957 and caused a real shock during his exhibition that opened in Prague in April 1957. The exhibition, which showed paintings from 1948-1956 as well as design, became the first manifestation of art radically divorced from any kind of realism since 1948 and the reactions in the newspapers launched a new discussion about the rehabilitation of Abstract art in the Czechoslovak art magazines.¹⁶⁰

Kotík informed about the responses to the exhibition also Jorn. In one of his letters from 1957 he added an explanation illuminating (the absence of) the role of Bauhaus in Czech art. The Czech interwar avant-garde largely ignored Abstract artists as Kandisky or Mondrian and instead developed 'under a dictatorship' of Picasso and Dalí, wrote Kotík. The prejudices against the 'nonliteral imagination' prohibited, according to him, the development of modernist Abstraction in Czechoslovakia.¹⁶¹ Kotík and Jorn shared more than the interest in applied arts and painterly expression, both were also politically committed artists. Kotík has never abandoned the idea of communism although he soon fully realised that this had nothing to do with the policy of the ruling Communist Party. Yet, the movement outside the party, as it happened after 1956 in the Western world, was more complicated in Czechoslovakia. In March 1957, Kotík had a chance to visit Paris for a short time and at this occasion he again met Jorn—and Guy Debord. However, the meeting didn't go smooth. In a letter to Jorn, Kotík described Debord as strict and rigid. In his eyes, Debord was substituting a lack of character by dogmatism.¹⁶² That Kotík thought of visuality in different terms that Debord becomes clear from the text he wrote together with Josef Istler and Mikuláš Medek in 1956, in which they pointed out the importance of the new upcoming era of imagination based on the senses and guided by the instincts of the hand and the eye, opposed to the previous era of abstraction. In 1957 Kotík published a

¹⁵⁹ Tomáš Pospiszyl, *Osudy svobodných umělců*, In: Idem, *Srovnávací studie*, Praha 2005, 97-130.

¹⁶⁰ Mladičová 2011 (note 154), 63-65 and 71.

¹⁶¹ Pospiszyl 2005 (note 159), 129-130.

¹⁶² Ibidem, 97-130.

study *The époque of the sight*, in which he claimed that the discovery of photography, film, mechanical reproduction and television launched a new époque of visibility opposed to the previous times dominated by the text. He refrained from claiming that the new époque of the sight was better than the one of the word; for him, it was just different and better suited for the contemporary way of living.¹⁶³ Hence, he didn't offer any critique of the dominance of the image in the sense of Debord. Although Kotík followed the Situationists through the publications sent to him by Jorn, some of their ideas would probably be more interesting for another romantic anti-capitalist, namely the poet Egon Bondy.

On the basis of *The époque of the sight*, Kotík was contacted in the same year by Bondy's friend Vladimír Boudník (1924-1968), who appreciated Kotík's view on the visual perception and associative imagination.¹⁶⁴ The year 1957 was for Boudník in many regards a breaking point. When he was invited by Kotík for a meeting, it was a beginning of a new era for him, although many changes in Boudník's work happened independently of Kotík. Encouraged by the cultural thaw, Kotík, Boudník and Mikuláš Medek visited in September Josef Istler with an intention of creating an 'official avant-garde'. But who was Boudník that he was supposed to take a place next to the artists as Kotík, Medek and Istler? The answer is confusing, Boudník was at the time a factory worker. Hence, also in Czechoslovakia it is fruitful to have a look into the factory in search for the progressive art.

The foundations of Boudník's unique art were laid in 1947 when he as a student of a graphic school realised the potential of imagination provoked by various stains on surfaces such as desks and walls. At the same time, as a result of his traumatic experiences during WWII in Germany, he was writing and sending out peace appeals and manifestos *To the Nations!* (1947-1948). However, these were soon superseded by manifestos promoting his art of Explosionalism. The first manifesto *Art—Explosionalism* was published in March 1949 and was followed by a more condensed *Manifesto of Explosionalism no. 2* in April. Both defined the principles of new art based on associations and expressed a conviction that everyone can be an artist. Explosionalism was not defined as an artistic style, but rather as a life approach with the goal of changing the life of every single human. "*The picture cannot be a snapshot, this is a role of photography. The picture has to be a filmstrip containing an immense amount of tension and psychological explosions condensed to the still surface in an endlessly short time in synergy with the viewers*"

¹⁶³ Mladičová 2011 (note 154), 83; Jan Kotík—Josef Istler—Mikuláš Medek, *Z československého výtvarnictví*, in: Jiří Ševčík—Pavčina Morganová—Dagmar Dušková, *České umění 1938-1989. Programy, kritické texty, dokumenty*, Praha 2001, 215; and Jan Kotík, *Údobí zraku*, in: *Tvar IX*, 1957, no. 1, 1-2, partly reprinted in: Mladičová 2013 (note 156), 52.

¹⁶⁴ Mladičová 2011 (note 154), 83.

dynamic imagination,” wrote Boudník in his second manifesto.¹⁶⁵ In the same year he started to promote his view of art in his ‘actions in the streets’, which took place in different parts of Prague until 1957. We can make a picture of Boudník’s actions from his text *Street* and from a later description by Egon Bondy. Boudník would start painting in the street against a weathered wall. This attracted the attention of the passer-by’s, which was his goal in order to explain Explosionalism as well as to heighten people’s sensitivity towards the visual imagination. According to Bondy, it was not painting but the interpretation that mattered.¹⁶⁶ Also in 1949, Boudník got in touch with Mikuláš Medek with whom he corresponded and met few times, although he rejected Surrealism. In the same year, he also met Egon Bondy, a future legend of the Czech underground, and in 1950 the writer Bohumil Hrabal. Through Hrabal he met the poet and artist Jiří Kolář in 1956, who became one of Boudník’s first collectors.¹⁶⁷ Karel Teige also showed an interest in meeting Boudník in 1951, but his abrupt death few months after prevented the meeting.

In 1950, Boudník started to work as a graphic designer, but already in 1952 he resigned on his position to start working as a lathe operator in a machinery factory *Středočeské strojírny*, commonly known as *Aero Vysočany*. Not before long, he realised that the factory environment required a different approach than the actions in the streets. He constructed his own gravure press and started to use the leftovers of the duralumin plates found in the factory as graphic matrices, to demonstrate his ideas to the co-workers. In 1955 he discovered the so called ‘active graphics’, which helped him to move more towards Abstraction. While around 1949 he would get inspired by abstract surfaces to create realist motifs, he gradually started to move to the opposite: real ideas and emotions were expressed by Abstraction developed from the stains. The active graphics were a direct response to the environment of the factory and a step towards Boudník’s unfulfilled dream to ‘print the whole factory’. The matrix would be a metal sheet from the factory and the graphic instruments all possible factory tools such as solders, hammers, chisels or screwdrivers. The adjective ‘active’ connoted, according to Jiří Valoch, the activation of the matrix by the tools, but it could also be understood as a tool itself for the activation of the viewer’s sensitivity.¹⁶⁸ According to Vladimír Merhaut, the active graphics was an example

¹⁶⁵ Jiří Valoch, *Boudníková padesátá léta*; in: Zdenek Primus, *Vladimír Boudník - Mezi avantgardou a undergroundem*, Praha 2004, 67; and Vladimír Boudník, *Manifest explosionalismu č. 2*, in: Jiří Ševčík—Pavlaína Morganová—Dagmar Dušková 2001 (note 163), 210-211.

¹⁶⁶ Vladimír Boudník, *Ulice*, in: *Edice Explosionalismus*, 1952, published in: *Výtvarná práce*, no. 13, 1966, 8; and the memory of Egon Bondy from 10. 10. 2003 cited in: Valoch 2004 (note 165), 56-57.

¹⁶⁷ Jan Rous, *Prométheus z periferie*, in: Primus 2004 (note 165), 16-17.

¹⁶⁸ Valoch 2004 (note 165), 71-74; and a letter of VB from 1. 11. 1958, quoted in: Valoch 2004 (note 165), 57-58.

of a natural connection of the artist with the factory and its aesthetics free of the political pressures of the period, which required very different approaches to the representation of the factories and the workers.¹⁶⁹ Along with the radical revision of the graphics technique, Boudník has also broken the rules of the mechanically reproduced medium in his active graphics by giving each print a specific finish making each print since around 1956-57 unique.¹⁷⁰ Boudník shared his discovery with his co-workers whom he encouraged in their own graphic experiments based on his methods. He became the head of the factory art club and exhibited in the *LUT* (Amateur artistic production) competitions in the factory canteen. This allowed Boudník to publicly—although to a limited public—show works which no Czechoslovak art gallery could exhibit at that time.

Yet, Boudník's relationship to the factory was an ambivalent one. The factory was draining him of both physical and mental energy. The repetitive labour, noise, dirt as well as 'jeers and silly twaddles' were exhausting him already since 1953, but even more so around 1957. At the same time, he complained about his popularity in the factory in a letter to Medek, especially because he believed that popularity prevented his ideas from a deeper understanding, similarly as the Situationists understood the process of the recuperation.¹ At this point, Boudník would also start to move to a different kind of audience. In 1957, he held a small exhibition together with Jiří Šmejkal in a studio of their friend Jaroslav Rotbauer in Prague-Libeň, but soon he would claim more recognition for his work. In 1957 he made his last action in the street, which was ridiculed in the newspapers, not least because of its 'Western' Abstract nature. He was also frustrated by the encounter with Kotík, Medek and Istler, since the small format of his graphic prints—chosen for its suitability for experimentation—hardly matched the large canvases of the three painters. In response, he created a series of large monotypes and started his fight for the recognition of his original Abstract art. Although he initially rejected to join the *Association of Visual Artists* in 1951 in order to be free and more connected with life, in 1958 he changed his mind. However, this efforts as well as his exhibition in the *Galerie Les Contemporains* in Brussels in 1958, secured by Jan Kotík, belong to another, politically freer era.

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¹⁶⁹ Vladimír Merhaut, Příběh Vladimíra Boudníka, Příběh na dané téma, in: Primus 2004 (note 165), 307.

¹⁷⁰ Valoch 2004 (note 165), 80.

¹⁷¹ Vladimír Boudník, A letter to Mikuláš Medek from 31. 10. 1957, in: Jan Placák, ed., Vladimír Boudník a přátelé, Svazek 1: Dopisy Vladimíra Boudníka Mikuláši Medkovi, Praha 2012, 66.

Bauhaus had a very different position in Denmark and in Czechoslovakia. Although some aspects of Bauhaus afterlife in Czechoslovakia could not have been mentioned here, such as the efforts of Josef Vydra (1884-1959) in Olomouc and Slovakia,¹⁷² it is clear that in the fields of fine art, Bauhaus was outcompeted by Surrealism and other -isms coming from Paris. The work of Vladimír Boudník was as loosely bound to Bauhaus as that of Paul Gadegaard, but despite all the differences, they both belong to the same tradition of engaged art. The comparison of their work is multifaceted. Not only they worked in different contexts, but also their personalities were very unlike. While Gadegaard created wall decorations, Boudník let himself get inspired by the weathered walls of old Prague. What unites them and makes them interesting for me is the contrast between the highly rationalised environment of the factories where they worked and their romantic attempts to enchant this environment and to speak to the workers—if in a more paternalistic way in Gadegaard's case. Their understanding of 'Abstraction' was apparently different, too. Unlike Gadegaard, who kept his privileged position of an artist among the workers and occasionally gave them lectures, Boudník's Abstract art was oriented on provoking the imagination sleeping inside every man and woman; in his view, everyone could become an artist. He was ready to share his discoveries with anyone and promoted them at any occasion. His Abstract art was never truly abstract, since in his eyes it changed into a kaleidoscopic parade of figurative associations. As Jiří Valoch pointed out, the fact that we today most appreciate the abstract quality of Boudník's graphics is one of the greatest paradoxes of his work.¹⁷³ Another paradox highlighted by Jiří Valoch was that Boudník actually attempted to create art which would be close to a 'common man' in general as well as to his concrete co-workers in the factory, that is the same goals as the official socialist art policy proclaimed. Last but not least, the 'tragedy' of Boudník lay in one more paradox: Explosionalism was for Boudník an idea that was to be a movement; yet, even his friends were contributing to its development only sparsely and inconsistently. Boudník's hypersensitivity, to which his art owed a lot, was often putting his mental health in question, and it is suggested that besides meteoropathy he could have suffered also from bipolar disorder. As a result, Explosionalism could have never become a collective movement and had to stay an expression of an individual because of its author's extreme sensitivity and imagination.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Alena Kavčáková, Josef Vydra (1884-1959) v kontextu umělecké a výtvarně pedagogické avantgardy 20. století, Olomouc 2010.

¹⁷³ Valoch 2004 (note 165), 54.

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem, 59, 62 and 67.

Conclusion

The period of the Cold War has in many regards influenced our perception of geopolitics. Until today, even more than twenty years after its end and the proclaimed end of history, we encounter its aftermath in such events as the current situation in Ukraine. Whereas the binaries have been in the last decades seemingly overcome by one grand narrative of an endless growth, the previously peripheral regions of both former East and West have been integrated in the global world, often at cost of dismantling of the postwar welfare state. Regarding art history, while living artists from the former Eastern Block are slowly included in the international art circuit and the terms as *ostalgia* are discussed, the Nordic artists are awaking from the post-traumatic shock of the so called Nordic miracle. Yet, the monopolisation of the art world is, despite the advent of the Internet, self-evident. Considering the early postwar (or Cold War?) art, Cobra is often the only whiff of fresh air in recounting of the moving of the centre of the art world from Paris to New York. Cobra's rebellious rejection of dogmatism in both art and politics as well as its working on a principle of a decentralised network, cannot be without interest for anyone looking for an alternative to the centre—periphery model. Similarly refreshing is the work of Jørn Utzon. On the contrary, the art of Eastern Europe is barely ever mentioned in art history books. The common misconception that besides Socialist realism, which became a new kind of exoticism, nothing else could exist in the field of art and architecture, is fought slowly. The relevance of my thesis, as I primarily understood it, was to explore how modernism in its various manifestations could develop from a relatively equal position in year 1947 onwards in two small countries lying at the border dividing the postwar world into two camps. My focus was not on stressing differences which are obvious, but rather on adding colour into the black-and-white image of the Cold War. The binaries such as expressive Abstraction versus Socialist realism, or the interwar versus the postwar are illuminated from two different sources creating a kaleidoscopic mosaic where either-or is changed for both-and. This does not mean forgetting or displacing the horrors of the times where the either-or climate was becoming life-threatening, or the frustration of hopes turning into bitter disappointments, especially for those seeing a new world coming in one moment and waking up into a nightmare in the other. Scepticism was, however, a rare reaction for the truly Romantic spirits who fervently fought against the disenchantment of the world. This is probably also the lesson we can learn today; and thus, the legacy of the artists and architects discussed in this thesis is still speaking to us well beyond the aesthetics.

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Other:

- A telephone interview with Mrs. Potěšilová, the daughter of Zdeněk Plesník, March 2014.

Picture attachment



Arne Jacobsen, Aarhus town hall, 1937-1942.



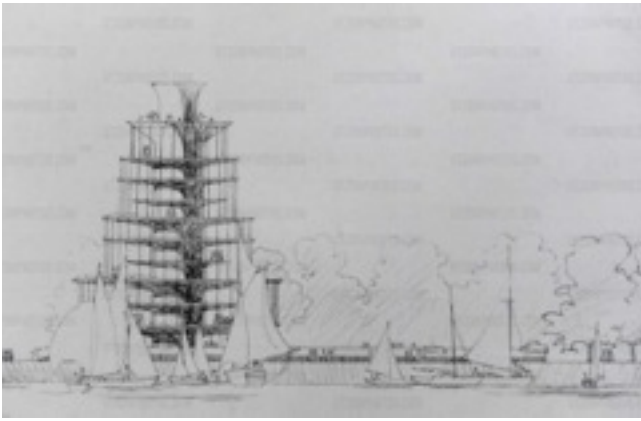
Competition entries for the National Assembly in Prague by: František Čermák—Gustav Paul, Jaroslav Fragner—Vincenc Makovský and Jan Víšek—J. Grunt—A. Zavřel, 1947.



Asger Jorn, Pour la Forme, Paris 1958.



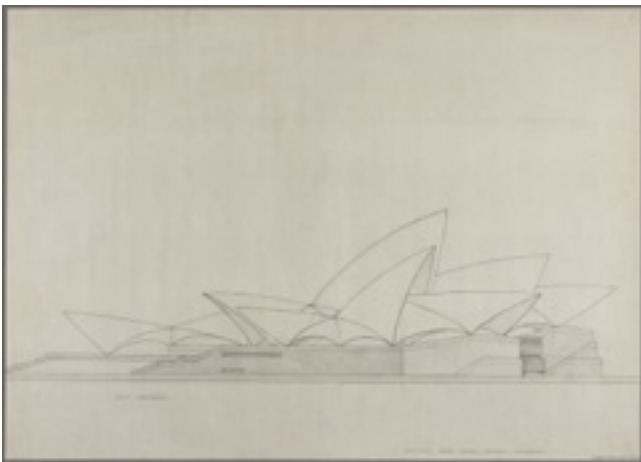
Ladislav Žák, Obytná krajina (Habitable Landscape), Prague 1947, the inner cover.



Jørn Utzon, a competition entry for the Langelinie Pavilion, Copenhagen, 1953.



Zdeněk Plesník, observatory in Valašské Meziříčí, 1947-1955.



Jørn Utzon, one of the original competition drawings for the Sydney Opera House, 1956.



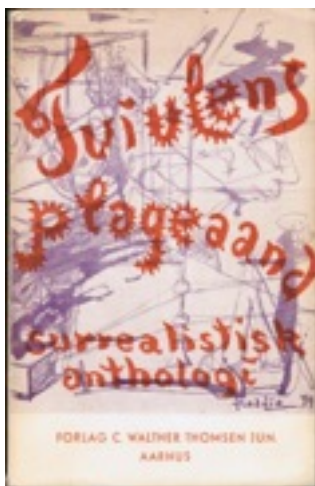
Zdeněk Plesník, design for the broadcasting transmitter building in Beijing 1954.



Arne Jacobsen, The Royal SAS Hotel in Copenhagen, 1955-1960.



František Kadeřábek and his team, Hotel International in Prague, 1952-1957.



Claude Serbanne, ed.,
Tivlens Plageaand,
Aarhus 1947. Cover by
Wilhelm Freddie.



N. Arnaud, A. Jorn, Z.
Lorenc, C. Dotremont,
Le surréalisme
révolutionnaire, 1948.



Jindřich Heisler, ed.,
Néon no. 2, February
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Frederick Kiesler.



Václav Zykmond, ed.,
Group Ra anthology,
Prague - Brno 1947.
Cover: V. Reichmann.



Asger Jorn, Letter to my Son, 1956-57.
Oil on canvas, 130 x 195,5 cm.



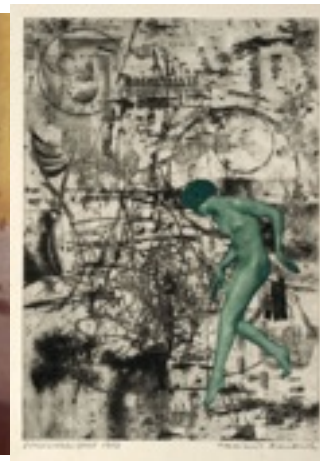
Ib Geertsens & Jean Dewasne, Composition
(Geert-wasne), 1949. Oil on canvas, 41 x 52 cm.



Josef Istler, Still life, 1949. Oil on fiberboard,
70,5 x 95 cm.



Mikuláš Medek,
Imperialist Breakfast
(Emila and Flyes),
1952. Oil and tempera,
canvas, 110 x 80 cm.



Vladimír Boudník,
Explosionalism, 1956.
Active graphics with
collage, 181 x 120 mm.



Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, vase, 'Facett' line, Rörstrand, 1951.



Asger Jorn, Untitled, 1954. Ceramic, 32,5 x 26 x 4 cm



Viktor Brockdorff, Steelworks in Frederiksværk, 1955. Oil on canvas.



Jan Kotík, Sun, air, water, 1957-58. For the Expo 1958 in Brussels, reconstruction.



Jan Kotík, Rooster, 1950. Oil and tempera on canvas, 61 x 50,5 cm.



Pravoslav Rada, Book on the ceramic techniques, Prague 1956. A spread with the works by Pravoslav Rada: the teapot 1948 and the bull 1953.



Paul Gadegaard at work at the so called Black Factory in Herning, 1957 to 1961.



Vladimír Boudník during one of his actions in the streets, Prague, first half of the 1950s.